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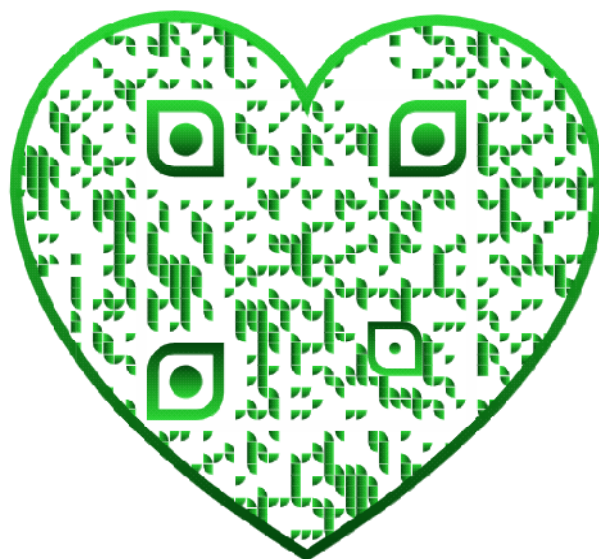
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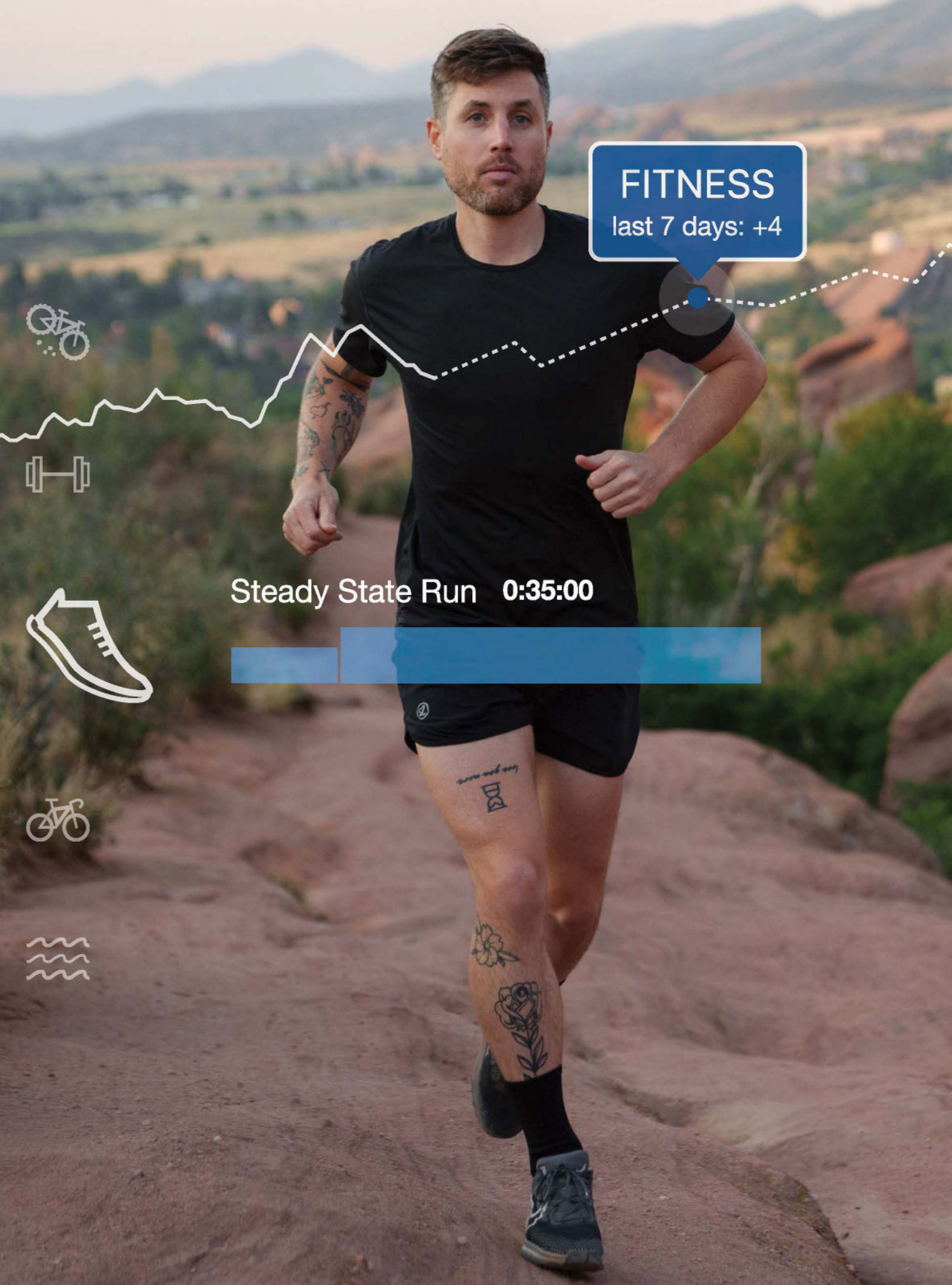


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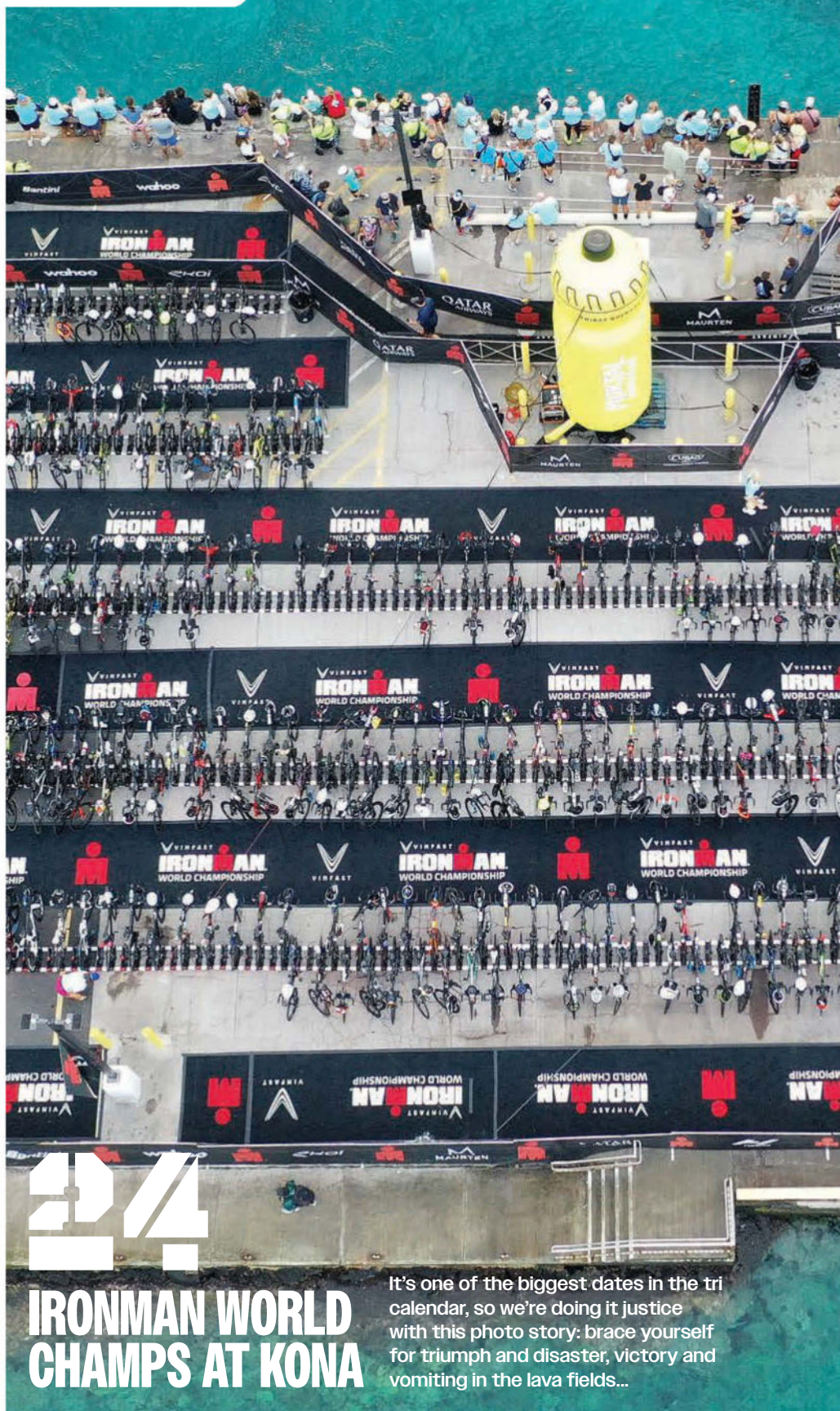
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IRONMAN WORLD CHAMPS AT KONA

It's one of the biggest dates in the tri calendar, so we're doing it justice with this photo story: brace yourself for triumph and disaster, victory and vomiting in the lava fields...



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CHANGING ROBES

Baby it's cold out there... But get a changing robe and you'll be toasty after training!

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Grab your Santa hat and get active this December.

Here's the best events to enter!

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HIGH PERFORMANCE STARTS WITH BREAKFAST

What's the highest impact and lowest effort change most age groupers can make to their training?

A better breakfast.

Without a high-quality breakfast it's hard to hit recommended levels of daily protein, hard to feel maximally fuelled for the demands of life and training, and more likely you'll be into the low-quality snacks by mid-morning.

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While we admire the festive spirit, there's no way that Santa hat is going to survive a streamlined freestyle swim start...

FROM THE EDITOR...

December is always a funny time of year in sports publishing. This issue is stranger than most however, as alongside a full photo report from the Ironman World Champs in Kona, showing the elite of our men's sport, we also have a guide to the best festive races to try... Yes, in the same issue as showing you what can be achieved with meticulous top-level training, we're also encouraging you to run around festooned in tinsel, dip in chilly water and refuel with plentiful supplies of mulled wine and mince pies. Maybe that's the beauty of being a triathlete though. We have swimming, cycling and running to play with (or we can put them all together) and we can train seriously but we can also use sport to have fun. Enjoy the season and we'll see you next month to help you plan your 2025 races!



Helen

Helen Webster, editor



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\$TART



DIVE INTO THE WORLD OF TRI



**THE
BIG
PIC**

Heavy swells saw the organisers of Challenge Barcelona on 3 November replace the swim with a 5km run. Despite not being able to showcase her strongest discipline, GB's Jess Learmonth still finished a solid second behind Germany's Caroline Pohle, while Belgium's Jonathan Wayaffe took the men's win in 2:18:55.

JOSÉ LUIS HOURCADE/
CHALLENGE MEDIA



@BY_WOUT/T100



NIGEL RODDIS/GETTY IMAGES FOR IRONMAN

▲ Taylor Knibb continued her dominance of the T100 series at the Lake Las Vegas course on 19 October. The US star took her third win from three starts with a colossal 5min cushion over Paris silver medallist Julie Derron (SUI), to lead the series with one race to go in Dubai on 16 November.

◀ GB's Lizzie Rayner took the lead of Ironman 70.3 Cascais, Portugal, on 19 October with 12km to go, and narrowly held on to it with a sprint for the finish with France's Jeanne Collonge, just 2secs separating them at the line. The result was Rayner's first victory since turning pro in 2022.

► It was Olympic champ Alex Yee's title to lose at the Grand Final in Torremolinos, Spain, on 20 October, and lose it, again, he almost did. Having missed the front bike pack, Yee started the 10k run 1:38mins in arrears. But his 10k prowess saw him cross the line in third to return the men's crown to GB for the first time in 12 years.

▼ GB's Georgia Taylor-Brown en route to fourth place – but a third world title – at the final supertri race of the year in NEOM, Saudi Arabia, on 3 November. In the men's race it was a Paris podium repeat (Alex Yee, Hayden Wilde and Leo Bergere), but with Wilde taking the overall crown, Bergere second and Yee fourth.





GETTY IMAGES



TIM HEMING

Cutting through the spin of tri to address the issues that matter, Tim is a sports journalist who has written extensively on triathlon for the national press.

ELECTION CONTROVERSY SULLIES TRIATHLON'S REPUTATION

World Triathlon has a new president, but allegations of a staged voting process have attracted criticism and raised a number of questions

It wouldn't be 2024, without divisive elections and triathlon is not immune. The actual racing can be the easy bit at times, and sandwiched between the World Triathlon Championship Series finals in Spain and the men's Ironman World Championship in Hawaii, we had a far more tactical contest – choosing the next leader of World Triathlon, the sport's governing body.

The Machiavelliansim had been clear weeks earlier when long-standing executive board members and two of eight presidential candidates, Mexico's Antonio Alvarez and Japan's Shin Otsuka, travelled to France for a European Triathlon Congress to present – only to withdraw from the contest and throw their support behind the secretary general Antonio Arimany of Spain.

Both Alvarez and Otsuka were reprimanded for breaching election rules and with ongoing concerns about how the election process was

being orchestrated, three of the remaining candidates, Australia's Michelle Cooper, Britain's Ian Howard and Hungary's Tamas Toth, wrote to International Olympic Committee (IOC) president Thomas Bach to complain that “extreme steps [were] being taken to determine the election outcome, coordinated, it would seem, by the secretary general himself.”

In Spain, Howard's final pre-election address left no doubt as to his position. “We stand at a crossroads,” he said. “You can choose more of the same and see the reputation of our federation increasingly damaged: unholy alliances, dodgy deals, dirty tricks.” That wasn't the end of the scheming. Arimany won by a landslide – 90 votes to Howard's next-best 29 – to succeed his compatriot Marisol Casado to the presidency; Casado stepping down having held the position for four terms since 2008.

But as unearthed by Jens

Weinreich in investigative publication *The Inquisitor*, a list of preferential candidates for each committee was circulated to persuadable delegates prior to the vote. The 71 names on the list almost exactly mirrored the final result. The rest – 90 or so – were out.

These included not just Howard and co, but those seen as their allies, yet despite the earlier wrist-slaps, Alvarez and Otsuka were elected as two of the four vice presidents. It led to Iceland's federation president Valerie Maier protesting on Facebook “the whole election was rigged!”

World Triathlon refutes this and says the elections were conducted in a transparent and democratic way, but it's clear that machinations were at play. The bigger question is whether all is fair in love and war and electioneering? Yes, if you're one of the individuals in a position of power, but having been in touch with several disillusioned delegates, the following fears were raised.

Most obviously, the lack of importance placed on a proper democratic process, which undermines trust. Secondly, the loss of specialist experience of highly competent individuals from various committees. Thirdly, that World Triathlon needed leadership reform because it is falling behind private organisations in the sport, and its flagship World Triathlon Series Championship is suffering.

The argument is Arimany is a continuation of the existing administration and won't bring change. Finally, on the thorny issue of transgender, the incumbents are aligned with IOC policy of allowing athletes who have been through male puberty to compete in women's events.

Will the result stand? It seems so. Some candidates have said it's time to move forward. Others have told 220 that official complaints have been lodged, but World Triathlon, at time of print, denies any knowledge of this. If a complaint is lodged, that process would first go to the sport's tribunal and could eventually end up at the Court of Arbitration for Sport, where Arimany has been serving as vice-president since 2023. **220**

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"OVER 98% OF OUR INCOME GOES TO THE ATHLETES WE SUPPORT"

Fiona Carter set up CASS & Friends to help budding stars fuel their passion and quickly fell in love with tri...



FIONA CARTER

Fiona Carter from Cheltenham is married with two children. Passionate about sport, she set up the charity CASS & Friends (Cotswold Athletes Support Scheme) in 2015. In October 2024, she completed her first Ironman.

I fell in love with triathlon when I met so many inspirational people during swim camps in Lanzarote and then through my local tri club. Triathletes revel in talking about their sport, gadgets and equipment, so I was eager to gain helpful hints and tips. I seemed to have an endless stream of neoprene and nose clips arriving in the post! And finding a trisuit that fits comfortably – well, that's another matter!

I signed up for my first Ironman because I enjoy a challenge, particularly being out of my comfort zone. I also love to travel. In lockdown, I set myself a challenge of running a sub three-hour marathon and I had the opportunity to race as a GB age-group duathlete for several years. Many of my sporty friends were triathletes, and I watched them go to cool places and compete on amazing courses all over the world.

The only problem was I couldn't swim. I remember the day I managed 10 lengths of the local pool (occasionally stopping to grab the wall next to me) and did a bike ride the same day. My first "double session" day and I felt like I was becoming a triathlete.

I set up CASS & Friends because I adore sport, but I am not a fan of how financial barriers can prevent some athletes from reaching their



"I am not a fan of how financial barriers can prevent some athletes reaching their potential"

full potential. Imagine what it would be like to miss out on achieving your sporting dreams of going to the Olympics or the Ironman World Championships when it isn't talent or hard work holding you back.

It's the difference between the best kit, the best coaches, the best physios and the ability to travel or enter competitions because it's too expensive for your parents to afford to pay for everything you desperately need to compete on a level playing field with your more affluent competitors.

Triathlon is a great example of the faster, lighter bikes and carbon-plated shoes making performance differences, which come with a hefty price tag. CASS & Friends tries to mitigate this and is rather like a mini sports aid. We give our athletes between the age of 12–18 grants of up to £2,000 per year.

Some of our young athletes have difficult home situations, but they all have the same desire to compete at the highest level and

they have the ability and determination to do this. What we want more than anything is to let them know that we back them, believe in them and are excited to watch them progress.

The charity is run entirely by volunteers and over 98% of our income goes directly to the athletes we support. In addition, what makes the charity special is the eight-week sporting success mindset course that each athlete works through with a one-to-one mentor. With more and more teenagers suffering from anxiety, we believe this is invaluable and sets them up for competitions as well as everyday life.

I was so happy to see our ambassador Nikki Bartlett finish fifth at the World Champs in Nice. She's an absolute legend and such an inspiration. I remember when she came to talk at one of our events and she shared the story of one of her old school teachers telling her she wasn't going to make a success of her life. I wonder what the teacher would be thinking now! **END**

VENTETE AH-1 HELMET

£350 *Taking minimalism to a new level, the Ventete helmet has one key USP – it's inflatable and packs down to the size of a laptop. But do you need one?*



Made in Switzerland and using cutting edge technology to solve a problem we didn't even know we had, the Ventete helmet is designed for cyclists who like to keep things streamlined and stashed away. Coming in three sizes (small, medium or large) and weighing in at a tiny 465g for size medium, the lid is made from structural inflatable technology built from triple-laminated, high-tenacity nylon for tear and abrasion resistance. A Glassfibre reinforced protective rib then provides braced

reinforcement across each chamber. The helmet comes with a mini pump and inflates in under 30 seconds – then to deflate again, simply press the air out before stashing it away flat in its storage case. Interestingly it's claimed the helmet is cooler than most as it's less insulating and the portability may be interesting to athletes who travel a lot for training. We don't have any info on how streamlined it is though and it is pricey. Testing soon in our Kit Zone pages. [ventete.com](https://www.ventete.com) **220**

HIGHER, FASTER AND STRONGER

LAPIERRE'S NEW XELIUS DRS IS THE BIKE THAT CASSANDRE BEAUGRAND RODE TO PARISIAN GLORY IN THIS SUMMER'S OLYMPIC GAMES

French brand Lapierre enjoyed a priceless marketing win when Cassandra Beaugrand stormed to women's Olympic triathlon victory upon the new Xelius DRS. Now, you can follow in Beaugrand's skid marks (or follow in Beaugrand's slipstream) as the bike that's been used in 'secret' for months is now available to the general public.

It's claimed that it's 15% more aerodynamically efficient than its predecessors, the Xelius SL and Aircode DRS, thanks primarily to new Kammtail and elliptical profiles. A Kammtail foil's when a bike manufacturer takes an elliptical tubing – highly aerodynamic – and then chops off

the end to satisfy the international cycling governing body's rules on tube ratios, but it still performs aerodynamically thanks to this 'virtual tail'.

It's part of Lapierre's 3D Tubular frame design that also allows the seat tube to be "completely freed up", offering enhanced vertical compliance and improving rider comfort on long rides. The 3D Tubular design also contributes to weight savings, making the Xelius DRS lighter and more responsive without sacrificing strength.

The UK range includes four models – the Xelius DRS 6.0, 7.0, 8.0 and 9.0 – all equipped with the Shimano Di2 electronic shifting. Prices start from £3,699. [B20](#)



► Cassandra Beaugrand riding her Lapierre in this year's Supertri race series.



SUPERTRI





INTERVIEW
LIZ BARRETT

IMAGE
GETTY IMAGES FOR IRONMAN

Nikki's Adventure All Day Buffets

Her return to training post-injury allowed Nikki to experiment on the bike...

"I found that I just loved these long adventure days on the bike. I called them my 'Adventure All Day Buffets'. Other than plotting a route and eating a lot, there was nothing else really on the target list. I gained confidence through distance, because my main issue with racing the full distance is that I'm not particularly confident in myself for that whole duration. I also trained my gut to take in a lot of food!"



The bike leg is Nikki's strongest discipline, seen here racing at Ironman 70.3 Les Sables d'Olonne 2024

THE COMEBACK QUEEN

Twelve months ago, GB long-distance pro Nikki Bartlett thought her career was over. But now, having fulfilled a lifelong ambition at the 2024 Ironman Worlds, she's at the top of her game. We caught up with the fan favourite before she took a little trip to Taupo...

Nikki Bartlett is loving life right now. Her infectious smile fills our screen as we catch up 10 days before she flies to Taupo, New Zealand, for the Ironman 70.3 World Champs. Still buzzing from her career-best fifth-place finish at the Ironman Worlds in Nice in September, and then marrying her long-time partner and coach Bex Milnes just six days later, the six-time Ironman/70.3 winner is riding high in a career that could have easily ended just 12 months ago.

A tear in her plantar saw her sidelined for eight agonising months, but, as the Loughborough-based pro tells us, her recovery and eventual comeback in June this year has been awash with silver linings...

220: Congratulations on the Nice result and your wedding, Nikki. What a month it must have been!

Nikki Bartlett: Thank you! I think it will be the most special, perfect month in our whole life. Post-race we just went on a massive, two-week, absolute binge socialising. I didn't take care of my recovery at all! But it was worth it.

220: How has it fired you up for the 70.3 Worlds?

NB: I think because I had that time to chill [after Nice], I've found my motivation leading into the 70.3 Champs is still super high. And I did start my season a lot later than probably every other single pro, coming back really carefully from injury. So I feel quite fresh, and I actually don't want my season to end!

220: Your foot injury took you out of racing for eight months. How did it start and how did you cope?

NB: Yeah, after Ironman Wales [which Nikki won in September 2023] it got really bad. And then I tried to do a build into Ironman Portugal and it was the worst pain I've ever experienced in all my life in a race. Well, actually no, Ironman Wales was super painful, but anyone who's done it, they'll know that the crowd support makes you feel like you're not even doing an Ironman! And it doesn't matter what pain you're in, it just lifts you. Afterwards my foot was seriously in pain, but I just carried that race high into Portugal, which, in hindsight, I should have got the scan straight after Wales. But you learn from your mistakes. So yeah, it was a really, really rough few months. I was pretty rock bottom. I thought my career was over. I wasn't even able to walk the dog. But then, as this year has shown, the most amazing times can come from it.

Because I'm quite a hyperactive person, Bex was like, 'Oh my God, what am I going to do with you?' Bex and I had been engaged for eight years, so I went 'Right, let's plan this wedding.' I went and found the venue because we had two very strict, tough criteria – Titch [their dog] had to be able to walk down the aisle, and we'd named the wedding The Gay Games, because we wanted inflatables [obstacle courses] all over the place. That narrowed our search down quite quickly!

220: And then how did you start your recovery?

NB: When I was allowed to, I just went and put all my energy into swimming. It's my weakness, so we stripped it all back, went back to basics, looked at my technique, and I actually really enjoyed just focusing on one of the disciplines. And as we know, if it's your weak discipline, swimming can really suffer when you're tired. And it's crazy how much you can improve when you're only doing one discipline. So again, another blessing in hindsight.

220: But Nice was always the goal?

NB: Yes, all I wanted to do was get to the Ironman World Champs in Nice. I told the sports doctor, give me the most cautious, slow return back. And whatever that timeline is, that's the timeline. If I raced before, that's a bonus.



Nikki can hardly believe it as she finishes fifth at the 2024 Ironman World Champs in Nice

220: You came back at 70.3 Les Sables (silver) and then 70.3 Swansea (gold). Was that a relief from a financial point of view?

NB: I've got retainers from some of my great sponsors, but obviously a lot of the money is in my performance bonuses. But I can't personally go to a race where I'm not at my best because I won't perform at my best. And if you're having an average day now, you could be like, 10th. Equally you could just race loads, as some people do and are very good at, but for the majority if we race a lot it's not sustainable. For the rest of my career I will aim for races for pure performance at my best, so I only race four to five times a year. These girls are so fast, that even at my best it's so difficult to get on the podium. If I'm just a bit off, I'm absolutely nowhere to be seen.

220: Going into Nice, where did you think you might place?

NB: I wanted top 10, and Bex was telling me no, we're aiming top five. Now my ultimate, lifelong career

"Have fun in your training, whatever that looks like for you. For me, I love socialising so that's not coming out of my calendar!"

aim has been a top five at a world champs. I've always dreamt of going to that post-race press conference and being one of those five ladies on the seats. And when I looked at what I thought it was going to take, and at the long list of athletes who could also get that result – the whole field there could have come top 10 – it's so hard to be a hundred percent confident because anything can happen.

And we also had the smoothest run-in to the race ever. For anyone reading this, I'm pretty sure with every race there's no smooth run-in. But this one was weird, everything was just perfect, and I just got a horrible feeling that race day wouldn't be.

But I came out of the swim, and that was my first indication – 'oh my God, this dream day could happen.'

220: Are there any lessons that you learned from Nice that you will take with you into Taupo?

NB: Just really believing in yourself can go so far. I know it sounds so cliché, but just pure belief in your own ability. I knew I'd done everything I could and that I was in the best shape possible.

Also, I had a really amazing, fun build into the race. I just loved the training, and what I did would certainly not be everyone's cup of tea [see 'Nikki's Adventure All Day Buffets', p18]! I went away to train for three months, and we did different camps with different people, but the main bulk was with the paratri lot, who I've been training with since 2018. So it was just the most incredible winter.

Also, having fun in your training, whatever that looks like for you. For me, I love socialising, so that's not coming out of my calendar.

220: You've just launched a new podcast with Bex. Tell us about that.

NB: So it's called *Miles from Ordinary with Bex and Nikki*. My inbox is always full of questions, which I absolutely love, so we wanted to answer the community's questions and do whatever we can to give back. I think it's really ►



Nikki enjoying the crowds en route to winning her first UK 70.3 in Swansea, 2024

important to share that we do this because we love it. Sometimes you can get so bogged down with the numbers or performances that we can forget why we started. And obviously Bex coaches, but not everyone can afford a coach and some people just want to ask questions. There'll be training tales of the week, a training topic that Bex will answer, a lighthearted 'Wife Swap' section and we'll get some guests on as well.

220: You've never raced in New Zealand, do you think the course will suit you?

NB: If I have a good swim, yes. If I don't have a good swim, I think I might be in trouble. But yes I've been on the bike course with FulGaz [indoor cycling app], so I'm getting familiar with the punchy climbs and the long gradual descent. It's a bucket-list race. We're there for a month! We're having our honeymoon out there.

220: And what's the race-place aim for Taupo?

NB: Well when I've asked Bex, 'Do you think I can come top five here?' Her reaction's not quite the same [as it was Nice]! "Let's focus on your swim, bike, run," she says.

220: What's it like being coached by your wife? When do you know when you need some space?

NB: A very good question. No, I wouldn't want anyone else as my coach, she knows me inside out. She knows just by looking at me if I'm too tired. She'll know in a session whether I should just keep it lower end or if we can push on a little bit. It just works perfectly. But we have a cut-off time – after 7, 8pm, I'm not talking about training. If Bex starts bringing up session content for tomorrow, I'm like, nah, I'm unwinding. I recharge on my own, and she knows that.

Also, I want to carry on with my long adventure rides because I really enjoy them, and she knows that's what I need. If I went to another coach, they might say 'I don't want you riding eight hours'. The enjoyment benefit and training consistency is a lot greater than what should be done on paper.

220: You said your biggest goal was to finish top five at the Worlds, which you've done. So what becomes the next goal?

NB: I'll just go out there [in Taupo] with no fear and see what's possible. I feel like I've got nothing to lose. As I've shown, when you believe in yourself you can achieve your crazy, wildest dreams. **220**

Nikki's training switch from full to half

Nikki had 12 weeks between finishing Nice and starting Taupo. Here she shares how her training has altered for the next challenge...

"I've brought the mileage down a bit, mainly because it's later on in the year and I need more recovery time around training. Like today, for instance, we'd usually do a VO2 swim, hills into a tempo run and then a 2hr bike afterwards, but we've dropped the bike.

"On the swim, I'm doing a lot more VO2 because that start is going to be even more important than ever. If I don't have a good swim, I can say goodbye to a very good race there.

"With the running, I'm doing more like 1K, 800s kind of reps. And what I really enjoy and what's worked well is under over type work. So we might do anything between 10 and 14km worth of a K on, which can be anything from around 3:35mins a K, and then I do what I call 'a K not so on', because it's not full recovery. So it's at marathonish pace. It's mainly so that my K on, I don't go too hard, it's controlled.

"Biking, I'm doing more LT2 training [lactose threshold, between zones 2 and 3, at an intensity that causes a rapid increase in blood lactate]. I did quite a bit before Nice, which worked really well for me. I was doing anything between 70 to 90mins of LT2. I'm also doing quite a bit of VO2 efforts on the bike, and above LT2 on the bike as well."

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TTP435

A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR



Dear reader,

Need some training and racing inspiration? Or fancy signing up for your first race in 2024? Whatever your targets, our one goal here at **220 Triathlon** magazine is to make sure you achieve them. In every issue we bring you the best training and racing advice, as well as all the cutting-edge kit you need to perform at your optimum. And, for a limited time you can try your first six issues for just £19.97!

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Helen Webster, Editor

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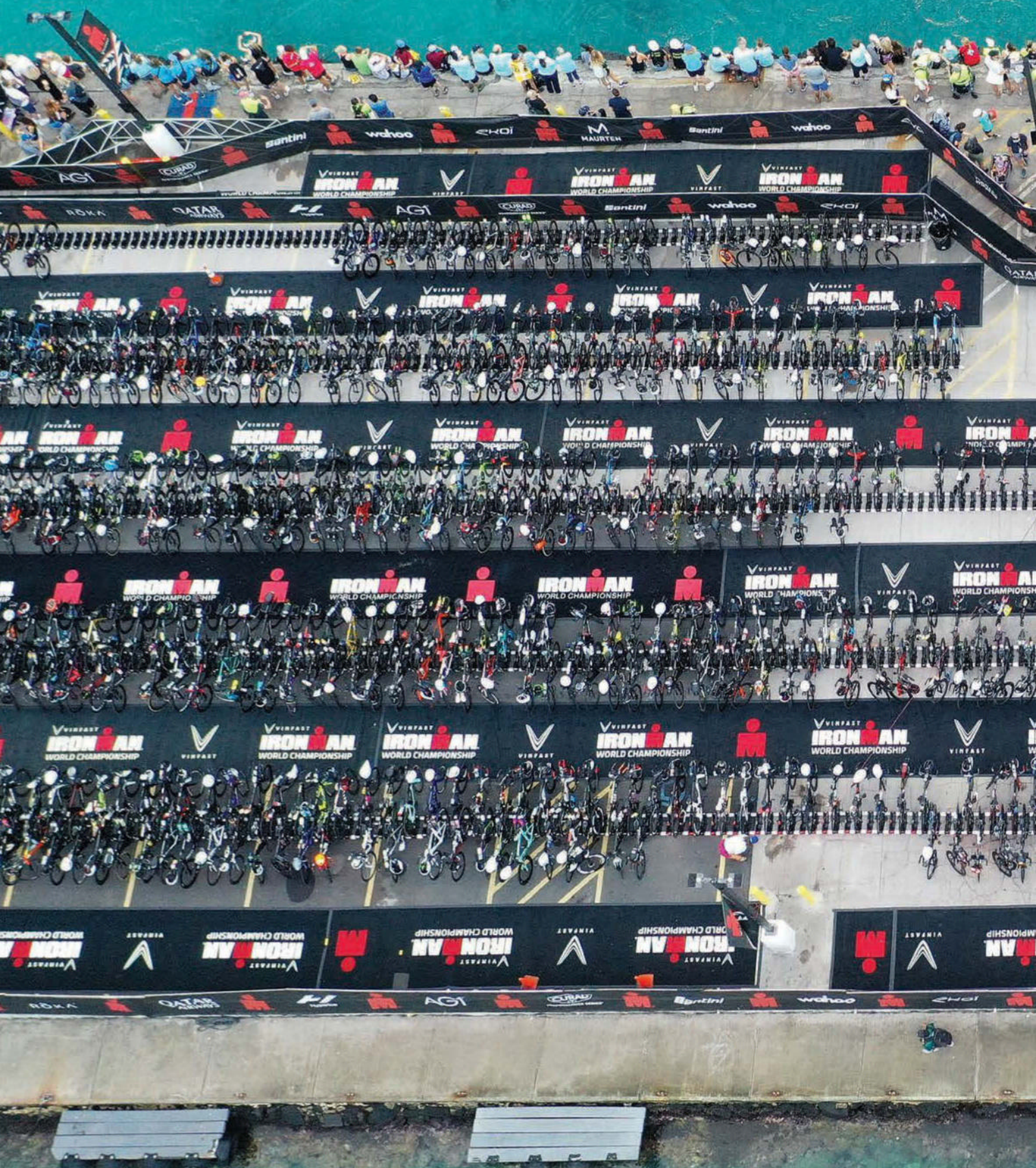
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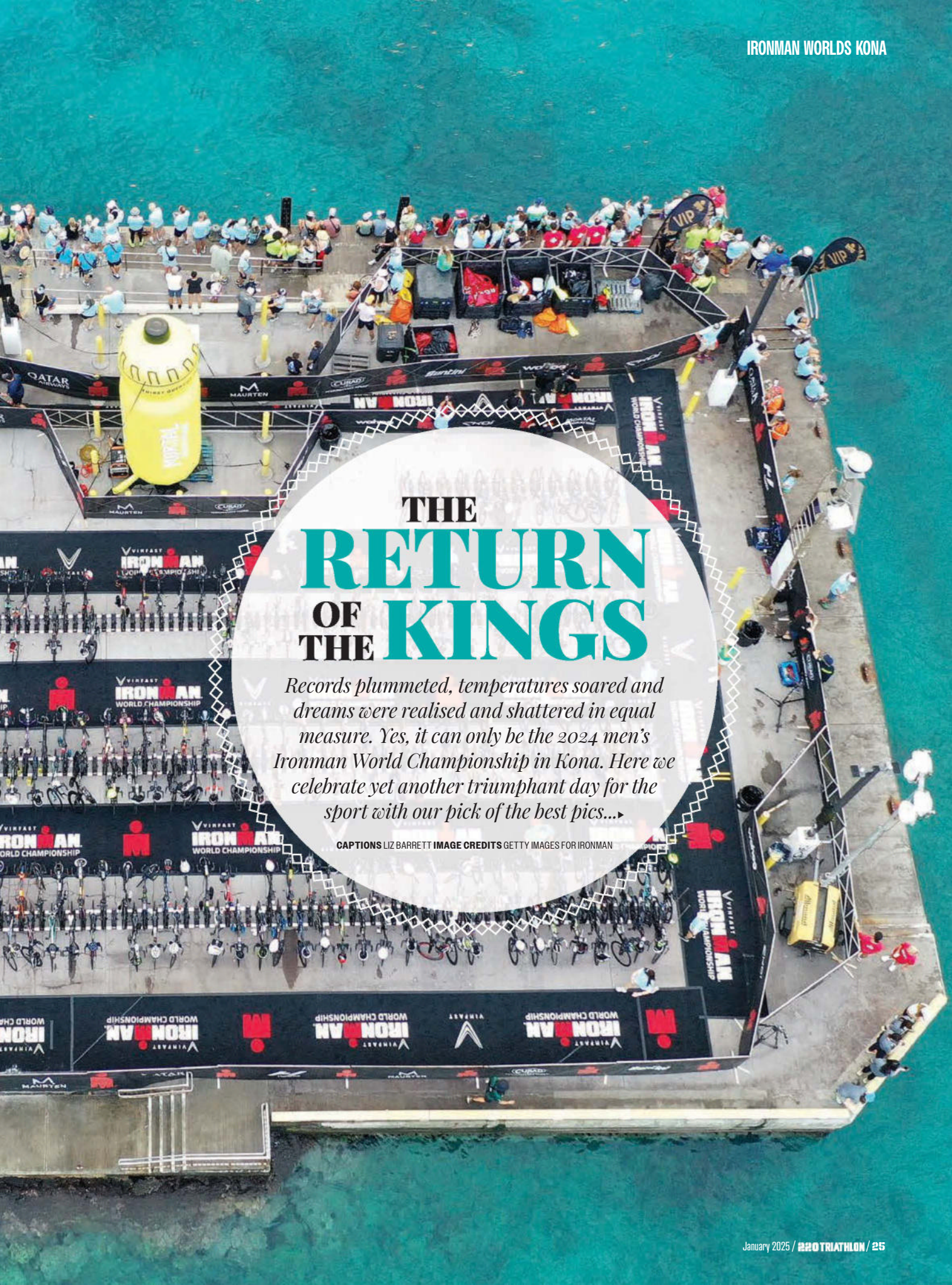
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▼ The stage is set for the start of the 2024 men's Ironman World Championship in Kona, Hawaii. It's the first solo men's race on the hallowed lava fields, as the women were the first to compete over the course in 2023 in the new split-location format, while the men headed to Nice, France.





THE RETURN OF THE KINGS

Records plummeted, temperatures soared and dreams were realised and shattered in equal measure. Yes, it can only be the 2024 men's Ironman World Championship in Kona. Here we celebrate yet another triumphant day for the sport with our pick of the best pics...

CAPTIONS LIZ BARRETT IMAGE CREDITS GETTY IMAGES FOR IRONMAN

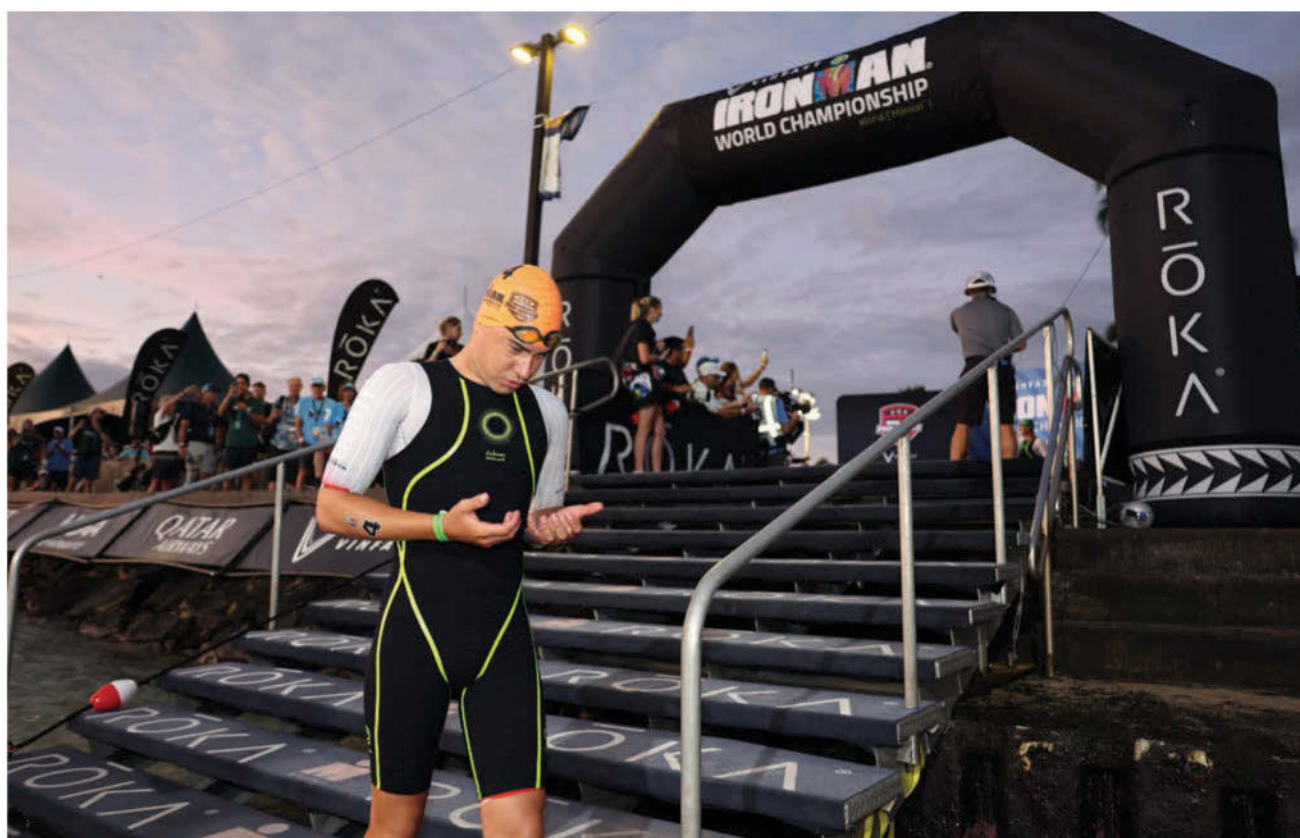
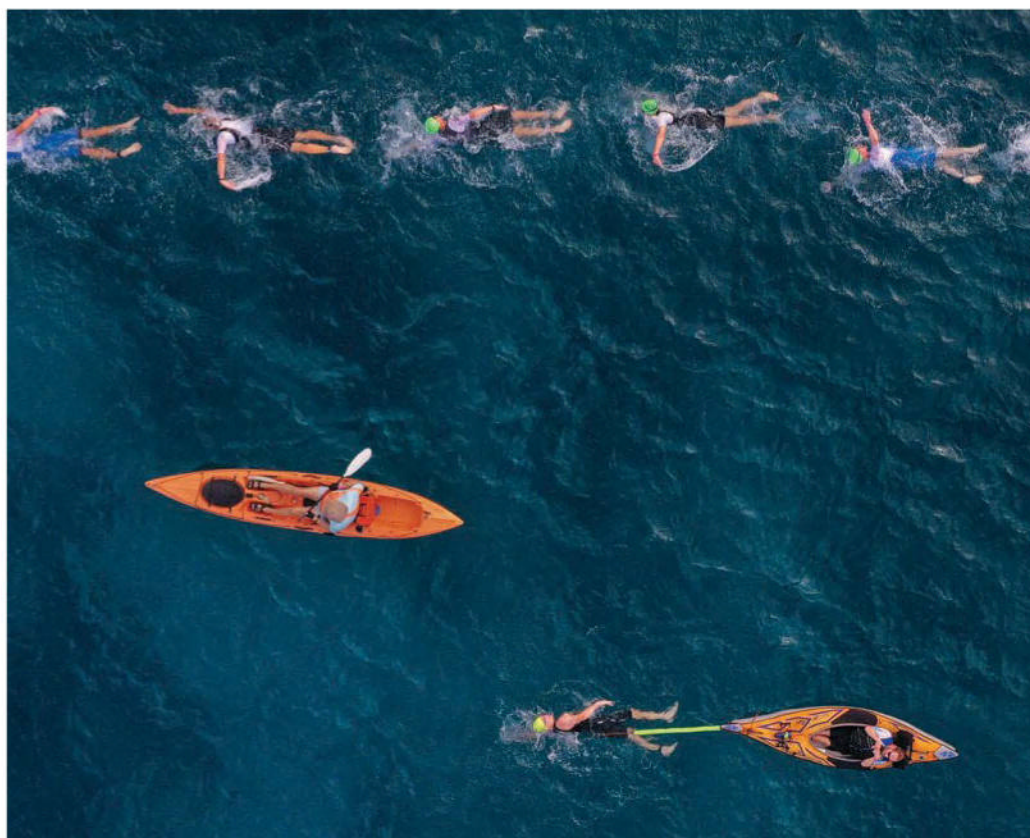


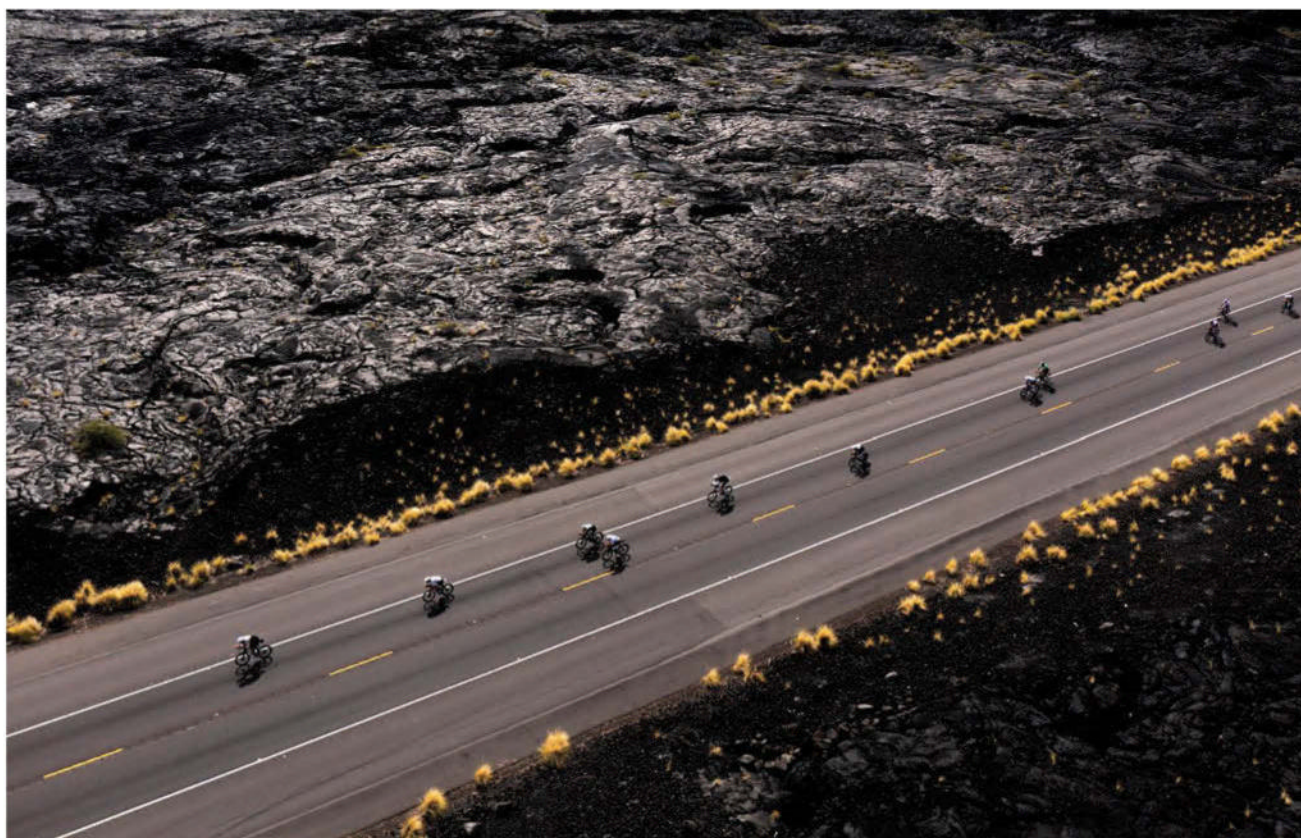
▲ Reigning world champion Sam Laidlow takes a moment to contemplate the task ahead. Despite, or perhaps because of, setting a new bike course record of 3:57:22 – an insane 7mins faster than his own record in 2022 – and leading at the start of the run, he was soon slowing to an almost halt, before eventually finishing 18th.

◀ In his Kona debut, Kieran Linders heads to T1 in fifth place despite a nasty encounter with a bloom of jellyfish. The swiftly-improving British pro led onto the bike, but the relentless course took its toll and saw him eventually drop back for the final 20k. The pacing plan paid off, though, he passed several others on the marathon to finish eighth and the top-placed Brit.

► Surrounded by age-group athletes and a support kayak, American Jeff Agar, 61, pulls his son Johnny, 30, who has cerebral palsy, in an inflatable boat during the swim leg, which they completed in 1:45:06. However, they sadly missed the time cut-off on the bike and were forced to DNF.

▼ Defending Kona champion (2022) Gustav Iden of Norway perhaps visualising holding that winner's Umeke bowl?! Or, more presciently, empty handed, which is how he would leave Kona. "[...] an absolutely brutal and humbling experience from the start, and still only went downhill from there," admitted Iden on Instagram. "I really tried my best just to finish, but I had to sit down on the Queen K and never managed to get back up again."





▲ The 2024 championship was the fastest on record, with seven men going under the previous bike course record of 4:04:35 and 16 men breaking the 8hr mark.

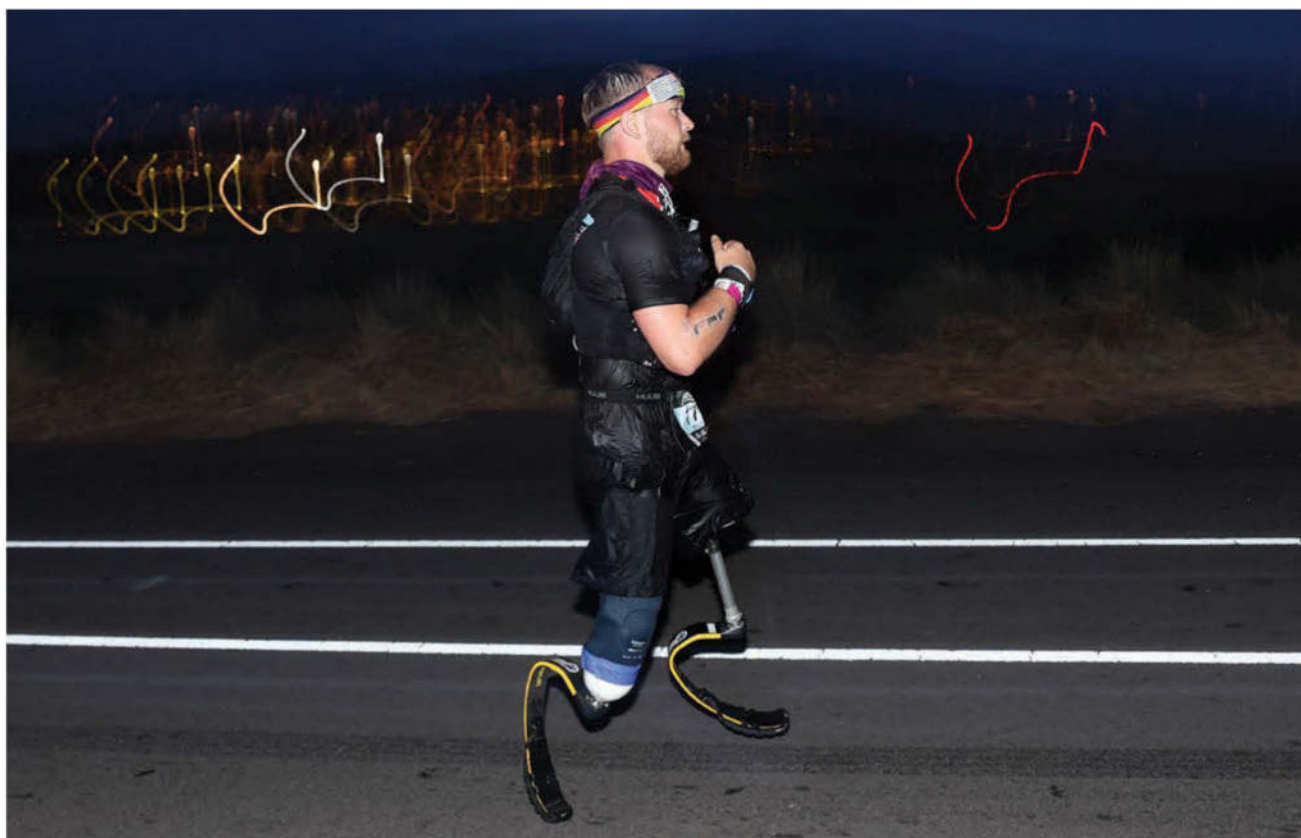
◀ Like his compatriot Gustav Iden, the multiple world and 2020 Olympic champion Kristian Blummenfelt had a day to forget after vomiting repeatedly during the bike leg and dropping back from a race-best third place to an eventual 35th.

► Following two third places in 2017 and 2018 and then two DNFs in 2019 and 2022, GB's David McNamee described crossing the line in 13th place (7:57:48) as "magical". He'd already made it known that 2024 would be his last time racing on the Big Island.



▼ France's Leon Chevalier, who's based in Bath, cooling down while chasing Patrick Lange down for what he believed for a moment could be the win. But the Energy Lab, a particularly-brutal exposed section on the run course, got the better of the chemical engineer, and he'd eventually cross the line fourth, which is still his best result to date.





▲ Broadcaster, racing driver and double amputee Billy Monger on the final marathon of his first Ironman world championship. The 25-year-old annihilated his predicted finish time of sub-17hrs with a mighty 14:23:56, coming first in the physically challenged category and setting a new double-amputee record.

◀ The top three men's finishers, from L-R: Magnus Ditlev (DEN, 2nd), Patrick Lange (GER, 1st) and Rudy Von Berg (USA, 3rd).

► Germany's Patrick Lange soaks up the adulation as he collects his third Ironman world title and with it a course record of 7:35:53. The 38-year-old veteran won by almost 8mins and added the 2024 crown to his 2017 and 2018 victories, also breaking the record for the longest gap between wins.



▼ The 2024 Ironman World Champs Awards Ceremony. From L-R: Kristian Hogenhaug (DEN, 9th), Cameron Wurf (AUS, 8th), Menno Koolhaas (NED, 5th), Rudy Von Berg (USA, 3rd), Patrick Lange (GER, 1st), Magnus Ditlev (DEN, 2nd), Leon Chevalier (FRA, 4th), Gregory Barnaby (ITA, 6th) and Matt Hanson (USA, 10th). **220**



GEAR OF THE YEAR 2024

Whatever your level of ability, the right kit has the potential to make you faster, to help you train smarter and to allow you to better measure your performance. But what has impressed our test team over the last 12 months? With hours of kit testing completed, here's our pick of the top 21 buys for swim, bike and run...

WORDS HELEN WEBSTER, JACK SIXTY,
JAMES WITTS JUDE PALMER, MATT BAIRD,
ROB SLADE, TOMOS WHITMARSH-KNIGHT



GORE TORRENT BIKE JACKET

Issue: January 2024

90%

£229.99 The Torrent kept me dry in even heavy, sustained downpours, with the three-layer Gore-Tex Active certainly doing its job. On the odd occasion that any water does get through the front zip (these are rarely completely waterproof), it's caught by the internal storm flap. There's a large zip pocket for a phone on the back, with a storm flap effectively protecting the zip from rain. The wrist cuffs are semi-elasticated so fit closely. When not in use, the Torrent packs down small, fits in a jersey pocket and weighs just 204g. **JS** gorewear.com

DDIPP SEA MONSTER HYDRO

Issue: March 2024

92%

£159 Version II of this robe has some tweaks made to improve waterproofing and breathability as well as waterproofing on the key/phone pocket and zips on the side hand pockets. All the things I originally loved about this robe are still in place, though. It's lightweight relative to its warmth and packs up into an inner pocket, too, which turns inside out to create a nifty bag complete with handle. The sleeves can be zipped off below the elbow meaning it's a bit easier to use for changing inside. The Sea Monster has a waterproof rating of 10,000mm and a breathable rating of 10,000gsm. **HW** ddipp.me



4iiii PRECISION 3+ POWERMETER

Issue: March 2024

91%

£329.99 The latest version of 4iiii's single-sided Precision power meter comes with an 'automatic terrain selector' to improve cadence and power accuracy on all terrain types, and the neat integration of Apple's Find My for discreet bike tracking. 4iiii has achieved this without adding weight, with the power meter itself weighing 9g. The claimed +/-1% power accuracy will partly depend on your left/right leg balance, but the power numbers were shown to be accurate according for me against a set of tried and tested power meter pedals. **JS** 4iiii.com



ZWIFT HUB ONE

Issue: March 2024

£549 Zwift's Hub One smart trainer comes with the clever Cog system, designed to work with bikes across generations and genres, and compatible with 'almost any' 8 to 12-speed bike. It means no worrying about cassette compatibility if you upgrade or downgrade your indoor training bike. One cog means there's no way to change gear, but Zwift have that covered too with its Click system which gives you 24 virtual gears with 700% range. Your £549 also gets you a year-long Zwift subscription. Power and cadence accuracy was well within what I'd expect compared to my power meter pedals and consistent across multiple sessions, with responsive changes in ERG mode. **JS** uk.zwift.com



90%

95%

ORCA ZEAL HIGH VIZ

Issue: Spring 2024

£379 This cold-water suit feels worth every penny. Those bright orange arms and legs are a superb idea for safety and unrivalled in this test. Plus you get a Restube Ready clip on the lower back. As well as the safety features, you get a combination of 5mm legs/core for warmth and buoyancy and Orca's superb 'batwing' rear closure, which includes an extra layer of neoprene to prevent cold trickles down the back and zip. This is a very buoyant suit and it did reduce fatigue over very long swims. Sizing is from XS to XL and it's worth noting this range also includes a thermal option for winter, a 'Perform' version and high-vis accessories. **HW** orca.com

SWANS VALKYRIE GOGGLES

Issue: August 2024

£44.99 Sleek, stylish and screaming 'performance', this is a classy package from the off. That mirrored finish is designed to help reduce glare and reflections which is brilliant in bright light conditions. This style also comes in a vast 16 colour and lens options. The silicone straps were comfy and felt secure. These are low profile goggles, so the gaskets are quite shallow. They were comfortable, though, and I quickly found a good seal without loads of faffing around with them. **HW** swansuk.co.uk



92%



ZOGGS PREDATOR POLARIZED ULTRA

95%

Issue: May 2024

£38 The frames here were comfortable and flexible thanks to that soft nose piece, while the 'Advanced Ultrafit' gaskets sat just outside my eye socket. The lenses weren't the biggest on test but I didn't have any issues with the range of vision, and the amber tint with polarised lenses gave superb clarity in most conditions. The rolled straps with flat backs felt secure and a simple clip made adjustment straightforward. Other colourways and lens options are available, too. **HW** zoggs.com



429 HUUB TT BAG

93%

Issue: May 2024

£99.99 Key features include a 40-litre capacity, a clever mesh foldaway helmet cradle and both wet and dry sections. The bottom wet compartment was large enough for all my soggy swim kit and kept it completely away from dry stuff. The main bag is split into two, which meant I could easily separate my bike and run kit. Multiple small pockets are handy and you also get two mesh bottle storage areas on the sides, ideal for bottles. The materials all feel top quality, while padded straps and a cushioned back panel make it comfortable. **HW** huubdesign.com



DMT KT1 TRI SHOES

Issue: Spring 2024

90%

£249.99 The KT1 is DMT's flagship triathlon shoe, with the Italian brand claiming it offers premium sockless comfort and breathability. It's not just a case of sacrificing support for comfort either; DMT says its mapping technology adds different integrated structures within the knit to offer varying levels of support across the shoe. The knit construction also means that you can quickly and easily get plenty of tension from the single IP1 BOA dial. Coupled with the carbon sole, the KT1 certainly doesn't feel like a flimsy shoe. It's not the absolute stiffest we've ever tested and there was a tiny hint of flex out of the saddle, but on steady TT efforts this wasn't evident at all. The comfort is sublime, with the knit feeling luxurious against sockless feet on the bike. **JS** dmtcycling.com



FORM SMART SWIM 2

Issue: May 2024

95%

£229 Version two of the ground-breaking Smart Swim goggles include a heart rate monitor on the temple which opens up a whole extra level of tracking and analysis. Again there's that unique floating digital display in one lens, which means you can adjust your pace in real-time. That's as well as the SwimStraight function, which allows you to reduce the amount of sighting you need to do and swim directly to a given point using the in-lens compass (also available on the Smart Swim 1 via an app upgrade). For improving your swimming and offering live stats these are unrivalled. **HW** formswim.com



92%

CASTELLI PR2 SPEED SUIT

Issue: July 2024

£360 Castelli hasn't strayed far from the original's template with the PR 2, but that's no bad thing. Its drag-reduction appeal includes the lithe but effective laser-cut arms and legs, the latter hugging the thighs but staying restriction-free on the bike and run. The ribbed sleeves also offer speed-saving potential, while the sizeable two rear pockets deliver further aero gains due to their low-profile. The kangaroo-style pocket can also carry plenty of gels, and it doesn't sag when loaded. **MB** castelli-cycling.com



92%

FIZIK TRANSIRO AERIS LONG DISTANCE R1

Issue: April 2024

£109.99 Fizik's Transiro Mistica has long been a favourite of 220 reviewers in its numerous guises. The new Transiro Aeris Long Distance R1 has a slimmed-down appearance compared to the former, with a central cut-out that runs from the tip of the nose to just past halfway towards the back. A carbon-infused nylon shell and oversized carbon rails, along with the lightweight padding, bring the total weight down to 202g. That's impressive, and even more so as that includes the handy bottle-cage attachment at the rear. On the road, I instantly felt at home perched on the nose, and the cover is tacky enough to hold you in position without feeling like you're slipping out of place. **JS** [Fizik.com](https://fizik.com)

95%

HOKA SKYWARD X*Issue: June 2024*

£105 Hoka is well known for its high-stack, max cushioned shoes, and the brand has innovated once more with even more stack and cushion. The Skyward X left me taken aback when I pulled it out of the box due to the sheer size of it. Here is a carbon-plated daily trainer with a 48mm stack height at the heel and 42mm in the forefoot (46mm and 40mm for women). During each run, comfort and stability were the two most noticeable themes. Another characteristic that quickly became apparent was that the carbon-fibre plate delivered a highly efficient roll that produced a nice extra pop at toe-off, allowing me to push the pace or cruise however I pleased. I managed five consecutive days of running in this shoe with no muscle soreness, which is a miracle given my proneness to injury. **TWK** [hoka.com](https://www.hoka.com)

PARCOURS STRADE*Issue: September 2024*

£1,099 The Strade is British brand Parcour's flagship all-round aero wheelset, with rim depths of 49.2mm at the front and 54mm at the rear. My tyres went onto the rims very easily with no fighting or extreme tightness, and I pumped them up to 80psi for my test rides. To ride, the Strade wheels have a great balance between speed, smoothness and stiffness. They're very responsive when laying the power down, but when you're freewheeling or coasting at speed they feel luxury, and far more so than the price would suggest. **JS** [parcours.cc](https://www.parcours.cc)

91%



93%

GARMIN FENIX 8*Issue: November 2024*

£949.99 The launch of the eighth edition of this watch is arguably the one we've been waiting for, as it brings the AMOLED screen to the range, creating a do-it-all watch with nothing missing that gives triathletes the full package. These are still chunky watches compared to the Forerunners but it's available in 43mm, 47mm and 51mm. There are also new voice-activated features. A built-in speaker and microphone mean you can make and take phone calls from the watch. **HW** [garmin.com](https://www.garmin.com)

TOPEAK REDLITE 80*Issue: December 2024*

94%



£24.99 If you need a rear light that will definitely work on modern triathlon bikes, look no further than Topeak's Redlite 30. The light itself, a 30-lumen beam at its most powerful with three modes, magnetically attaches to a clip with an adhesive strip on its underside, and you simply stick it under the base of your saddle. The adhesive is strong and I was confident it wouldn't come off during test rides, and the unit is dainty enough that you can still mount a saddle bag or rear hydration. The light is impressively bright, you'll get up to 30 hours out of it and charging is via USB-C. **JS** [topeak.com](https://www.topeak.com)

BROOKS GHOST 2 MAX*Issue: November 2024*

95%

£145 The Ghost 2 Max is a reliable, quietly confident shoe that I'd turn to for long runs, easy miles and times when you just want to switch off. The shoe encourages good roll through from landing to toe off, which could make even the newest runner feel graceful and efficient. The mesh upper snugly holds the foot in place without feeling tight, while the firm heel cup and tongue are well padded. **JP** [brooksrunning.com](https://www.brooksrunning.com)





RACESKIN AERO TRISUIT

Issue: June 2024

£130 The Aero is a speed-focussed suit, meaning its rear pockets are smaller and the sleeves have prominent trip lines for improved aerodynamics, while the fit is tight. There are four pockets in total – one on each leg and two at the back – and the chamois is described as a ‘multi-density long distance pad for advanced comfort’. The leg grippers were comfortable, there was no chafing, and the prominent housing over the zip means there’s little chance of it catching around the neck. The suit’s impressively breathable, too. **JS** raceskin.co.uk

90%

SAILFISH G-RANGE 8

Issue: August 2024

97%

£691 From the first time pulling it on it fit like a glove, with just the right amount of stretch. Five thicknesses of neoprene are used with thicker (3mm) sections on the lower leg, hip and chest for a little support and lift rather than any major buoyancy. The arms and shoulders are 1.5mm but are constructed in such a way that I felt like I had plenty of flexibility to move. Even over long (4km) swims this suit kept me feeling strong and I didn’t experience any fatigue in my arms. The zip is a traditional bottom-up one and you get a lightweight bag included. **HW** sailfish.com



96%

LEAPING FISH SKIN AND SUIT LUBE

Issue: August 2024

£11.99 Made from natural oils and waxes, and in a handy tin, this hard wax can be warmed by scooching out a little and rubbing between your fingers. It smells good and I didn’t experience any chafing. I’ve used it as a moisturiser and lip balm in emergencies, too! It can be used through all three sports and includes tea tree oil, citronella and geranium to soothe skin. It’s a 60g product, made in the UK. **HW** leapingfish.co.uk

ORCA ATHLEX FLOW

Issue: June 2024

£379 The Athlex Flow is billed as Orca’s ‘most balanced’ suit and aims to find the sweet spot between flexibility and buoyancy. There is 2mm neoprene thickness in the arms and shoulders, and a mix of proven Yamamoto 39 and 38 neoprene across the build. Air pockets located between the two layers of neoprene and the 4/5mm thickness of the suit in parts of the legs and upper body give buoyancy. Orca’s trademark upper-body flexibility swiftly became apparent, feeling unrestrictive even towards the end of lengthy open-water swims. There’s also the offer of hydrodynamic potential with the Super Composite Skin (SCS) finish on the surface of the suit. **MB** orca.com **£20**



92%

THE 12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS TRAINING

Keen to keep moving over the festive period? Here are the best 12 seasonal workouts and events that will keep you active. Santa hats (not) optional... ▶

WORDS JAMES WITTS PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES





01 SANTA RUNS

Various dates in December 2024.

Difficulty level: ★★★★★

Depending on where you live, you can't help to have seen banners posted from October onwards directing you to an upcoming Santa Run. These are untimed 2km runs where you raise money for the Children's Hospice. As an example, there's one near where I live in North Somerset at Charlton Farm. Sign up for less than a tenner (children are £4.80; children under three are free), raise £25 for the Children's Hospice, and enjoy a fitness and fun boost all at the same time. Fancy dress isn't mandatory, but it'd be rather Scrooge-like not to dress as the bearded one (Father Christmas, not Noel Edmonds), a reindeer or something equally as festive.

There are further Xmas Pudding Runs and Santa Dashes that aren't affiliated to the Children's Hospice. Just search online and do your bit for others (and your cardiovascular system) this Christmas.

02 RAPHA FESTIVE 500

24th to 31st December 2024

Difficulty level: ★★★★★

More info: rapha.cc

The average weight gain during the Christmas period is 2lbs, which sounds optimistic given the amount of cheese that's consumed in our household over the ever-extended festive period. Yes, it's good to let off some steam. But not so much steam that you spend the first couple of months of the New Year aiming to return to where you once were at the start of December.

Which is where the Rapha Festive 500 comes in. The idea is that you ride 500km over eight days from Christmas Eve to New Year's Eve. That's an average

▲ Want to run about in a cotton wool beard and red suit? These are the events for you!

62.5km a day, though obviously you can split each day as you see fit. And indoors and outdoors is fine.

The apparel brand encourages riders to commemorate their festive efforts via photo albums, poems, hand-drawn maps... whatever you see fit will live long in the memory from your 500 efforts. The most inventive entries are rewarded with prizes from various sports companies including Rapha themselves.

03 12KS OF CHRISTMAS

14th December 2024

Difficulty level: ★★★★★

More info: gertlushevents.co.uk

Fancy fuelling a run around the beautiful Gloucestershire countryside by washing down a mince pie with a mug of mulled cider at the halfway

pitstop? Of course you do, so why not sign up to the inaugural '12ks of Christmas'?

The 12km trail run takes place around the stunning woods of Dursley that starts at the Leaf & Ground café and finishes at the nearby Dursley Rugby Club. After a series of hills, trails and thrills, you reach the 6km checkpoint that's packed with festive treats, including the pie and cider.

Fancy dress is encouraged so, as the press release says, "whether you're a nutcracker ballerina or a candy-cane superhero, flaunt your festive flair as you might just claim the prize for best-dressed runner?" You'll have competition though, as 220's Editor Helen is already signed up... Entry is £25.

04 FESTIVE SWIMS

24th and 25th December 2024; 1st January 2025

Difficulty level: Depends if you swim or paddle!

Festive swims take place across the country, from Redcar in the north to Weymouth in the south, with many raising monies for charity. In general, they take place on Christmas Day or Boxing Day.

For example, I've swum (well, paddled) at a Christmas Day swim in Exmouth, Devon, and endured similar on Boxing Day in Ventnor on the Isle of Wight. Both were memorable events with traditional Santa hats and Christmas jumpers mixing with far-too tight swim briefs and mankinis.

It's a tradition that stretches back years with Brighton Swimming Club's annual event, started in 1860, widely regarded as the UK's oldest.

If you're too busy preparing Christmas lunch and the Boxing Day buffet and a cold-water plunge is out of the question, fear not as there are many New Year's Day ▶

swims to satiate your sadistic streak. Just remember to bring your DryRobe. (Note: other post-warming items of apparel are available!)

05 NIGHT ON THE EDGE

30th November 2024

Difficulty rating: ★★★★★

Ever competed in a run event at night? This author has and I'd thoroughly recommend it. My favourite is the Wild Night Run held on Dartmoor each February (the 15th in 2025). It's organised by Wild Running, whose Wild Night Run series starts on 16th November at Burrator Reservoir, again on Dartmoor. They also run events on 30th November at Mount Edgcumbe (Night on the Edge, above, with 5km, 10km and half marathon distances on offer) and in Dorking, Surrey, on 18th January. What's different about running at night? Over to organiser Ceri Rees.

"Running at night is a great leveller. By day you may feel like you're sleepwalking through familiar landscapes. Darkness however, will force the rush of blood to your senses. For runners the evening is time to wake up. Reduced visibility brings an element of doubt, which works itself into your psyche, like a primeval spanner. What ensues can deepen the experience, as our imaginations reach new heights, and we have to forge new associations. A bridge can become a refuge as well as a convenience, a reflection in a reservoir becomes a beacon."

Night run races are pretty popular, so check online to see if there's an event near you. [I've done a few of the Maverick Race Dark Series events (maverick-race.com)



▲ People, dressing Santa hats and outfits for the festive swim, take part in the traditional Boxing Day in Deal, Kent, United Kingdom on December 26, 2022.

▼ Never mind the running, we want to know how he managed to jump so high!

and can really recommend those too! Just make sure you use a head torch with a battery you can trust, I found this out the hard way – Ed]

06 HALESOWEN TRI AQUATHLON

15th December 2024

Difficulty rating: ★★★★★

Find out more: clubs.britishtriathlon.org/HalesowenTri

Keep your competitive multisport juices flowing with this pre-Xmas swim-run event in the West Midlands. Based at the recently refurbished Halesowen Leisure Centre – which doubles as the transition area – a 400m pool swim's followed by a fairly flat 5km run. For those really racing at the peak of the pyramid, there are prizes for the first three open male and female competitors, and first male and female in the over-40, over-50 and over-60 age categories. (Competitors can only win one prize.)

There are also a number of Swim Bike Run Local events (that are often run, bike, run or run, bike) taking place throughout December and January. These are accessible and cost just £5.

07 SHERWOOD PINES FESTIVE DUATHLON

15th December 2024

Difficulty rating: ★★★★★

Find out more: wilddeerevents.co.uk

Robin Hood country is better known for the long-distance Outlaw Triathlon, held at Holme Pierrepont each July. But if you and your band of Merry(iron)Men (and women!) fancy an 'off-season', and off-road, effort in deepest, darkest Sherwood Pines near Mansfield, you're in luck.

There are two duathlons on offer. The Festive Sprint comprises a 5km trail run, 15km bike and 5km trail run, while The Festive Standard comes in at 10km trail run, 30km bike and 5km trail run. The bike course is suitable for any off-road bike, so gravel bikes are





GETTY

allowed but mountain bikes and their suspension will be smoother. There's also a 10km trail run and one-mile family run. Note: you do not need to wear a tunic, cap, green leggings and be a skilled archer to enter this!

08 BOX HILL KNACKER CRACKER

1st January 2025

Difficulty rating: ★★★★★

Find out more: trionium.com

The Knacker Cracker's billed itself as 'Britain's toughest 10km'. Well, for 2025 the route's billed as 'substantially harder' by its new organisers as this event on the steep, sharp tracks of the Sussex Downs has been adapted for ecological reasons, meaning it no longer runs up to Juniper Top, but instead goes up the bottom of Happy Valley. Or Unhappy Valley as it just grows steeper and steeper. It includes 473m of ascent and 335m of descent over its 10km course including two notoriously brutal sets of steps. Fancy dress is heartily encouraged albeit costumes aren't mandatory.

09 CHRISTMAS CRACKER! CATCH THE PANTHER HANDICAP ULTRAMARATHON AND TRAIL RACE

7th December 2024

Difficulty rating: ★★★★★

Find out more: runabc.co.uk

This is sold as the 'ultramarathon where anyone can win'. It's set on a mystery route that can change every year, albeit for 2024 we know that it starts in Otley, as race registration takes place at the West Yorkshire town's Bridge United Reform Church.

This is deemed one of the UK's most democratic of races because Catch the Panther sees the slowest runners start first with subsequent starting positions based on the participants' average pace in other races organised by Punk Panther. The person who starts first is the person with the slowest average pace – can they be caught before they reach Otley? As well as race prizes there are awards for fancy dress.

10 CHRISTMAS CRACKER CHILL SWIM

15th December 2024

Difficulty rating: ★★★★★

Find out more: vobster.com

While the festive swims are more about a dash into cool waters in fancy dress or brief swim attire, a very brief swim and dash out, this fundraising event at former quarry Vobster Quay in Somerset is generally crazy dudes in wetsuits with the occasional Santa hat thrown in for good measure. Afterwards, warm the old cackles with mulled wine, live music and a hot meal. Vobster will also be firing up their Heatwave fire pit to provide a warm and welcoming glow to proceedings.

11 CHRISTMAS CANOE PADDLE

7th–8th December; 14th–23rd December 2024

Difficulty rating: ★★★★★

Find out more: newforestactivities.co.uk

Okay, this one won't necessarily fire up your fast-twitch muscles and crank up your VO2max. It will, however, make your young children's Christmas as you and your family enjoy a 90-minute canoe tour on

Beaulieu River to find Santa.

Guides ensure you and Santa are safe, and at the end of it, you meet Father Christmas who'll dish out presents to your children (from a canoe not a sleigh!). Each adult is £37.80 while children between 18 months and 16 years old are £25.20.

12 ROUVY FESTIVE CHALLENGE

16th December 2024

to 5th January 2025

Difficulty rating: ★★★★★

Find out more: rouvy.com

If you prefer to keep your events fun indoors during the holiday season then Rouvy have a simple but fun challenge for you. Ride a set festive route between the latter part of December and first week of January and you'll receive a (virtual!) special jersey and bike. The real prize though? Keeping your training up over the festive period and escaping from in-laws and turkey curry. Just don't let on that we gave you the idea... Have a great festive break! **RRO**

▼ The Liverpool 5km Santa Dash is just one of many similar events up and down the UK.



GETTY

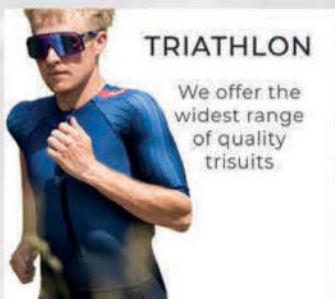


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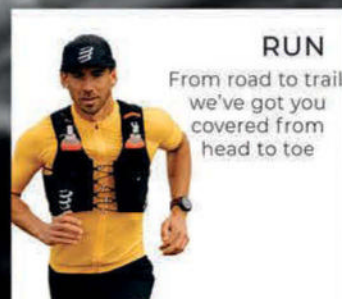
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HELEN WEBSTER

220's editor is also a qualified open-water swimming coach.



ROB SLADE

220's content editor and resident adventure seeker.



MATT BAIRD

Has spent years testing tri kit and accessories for 220.



JACK SEXTY

A strong age-groupie focusing on top-end gains.



JAMES WITTS

Former 220 editor James specialises in sports science.

OUR RATINGS



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WELL ENOUGH



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ON CLOUDSURFER NEXT

£140 ★★★★★

The last iteration of the On Cloudsurfer has been a regular in my shoe rotation since I first tested it in 2023. Back then, I scored it 89% and praised it for the plush cushioning, which was a pleasure to wear on easy runs. That's still the case now, so I was intrigued to see what the Cloudsurfer Next had to offer. The latter looks a little more like a dedicated run shoe, largely thanks to the lightweight engineered woven upper and the lack of oversized 'Cloudsurfer' tab on the tongue. It has a 6mm drop, versus 10mm on the Cloudsurfer.



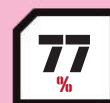
I've gone up half a size with these shoes, as I often need to do with On, and the fit is pretty much spot on for me. The lacing locks down the foot well and there's plenty of space for toe splaying in the toe box. However, if you do have particularly wide feet, there is a wide-fit option available, too. A quick note on weight, too. The last Cloudsurfer came in at 281g (size UK11.5) on the scales and there's a 27g increase for the Cloudsurfer Next. That's minor, and while the shoes of course feel heavier than race-day run shoes, they do feel light when in motion.

The comfort isn't quite as impressive as I experienced with the standard Cloudsurfer. The brand itself describes the cushioning as 'mid' rather than 'plush'. This means easier miles aren't quite as soft underfoot, though I wouldn't go as far to describe this as a firm ride. There's no carbon plate or rockplate, but the ride just felt a little flat and uninspiring at slower paces. That's fine if there's plush cushioning underfoot, but that's not the case here. When picking up to tempo pace things get a bit more lively and the Helion superfoam midsole starts to become noticeable. If you're a heel striker, you'll really start to appreciate the transition at this pace, too, right the way through from landing to toe off. It rolls nicely, which is helped by the forefoot rocker, and you can start to feel some propulsion, which

you don't get so much of in the older Cloudsurfer.

Underfoot, the outsole has proved grippy in a range of conditions, including wet pavement and paths covered in wet leaves. It's always hard to comment on durability until you've done a few hundred kilometres, but after regular use over a test period of six weeks, there's no noticeable signs of wear yet. While On says these shoes are neutral, I found them reassuringly stable and supportive. Every foot placement felt secure and, although it feels like there's slightly less cushioning around the tongue and ankle, it holds the ankle well. Meanwhile, I was also pleased to see that the graphics along the side of the shoes are reflective, which aids visibility while running at night.

It's hard to see how the Cloudsurfer Next would fit into my shoe rotation. There's better, more comfortable options for easy miles and more propulsive shoes for faster paces. Though, admittedly, the latter often come in at a higher price point, especially if they utilise a carbon plate. Ultimately, these are good shoes, but they'd just be best for runners that do their easy miles at a decent pace, or those who do a lot of tempo running. **RS** [on.com](https://www.on.com)



VERDICT Lightweight shoes that are fun to run in at tempo paces, not the comfiest for easy runs

“When picking up the tempo pace things get a bit more lively and the Helion midsole starts to become noticeable”



HUUB TRAVEL BACKPACK

£89.99 ★★★★★

Uhub has designed the Travel Backpack to strike a balance between a work pack and a transition bag. Given its 24-litre capacity and slimline design, I was dubious about how well it'd live up to the second half of that promise, but I was pleasantly surprised. I pretty much managed to fit everything into this pack for race day. That includes a wetsuit, towel, goggles, (size 11) bike shoes, energy gels, swim cap, water bottle and helmet (strapped to the outside). There's then some leftover space for things like extra socks, a jumper and race documents. I'd be hard-pushed to squeeze run shoes in there with everything else, but I'm normally wearing them on my feet when going to a race.

That storage is arranged cleverly, too. There's a separate compartment at the bottom for dirty shoes or a

wetsuit, though it's not waterproof. A main compartment is accessed via a clamshell-style zip that opens the whole front section, which makes it easy to load and grab things. Inside, there are further zip pockets for small items like nutrition, swim caps and other small bits. There's one elasticated side pocket that'll take a bidon, but any extra ones will have to go inside the bag.

On the travel/work side of things, you've got a spacious laptop compartment down the back and rear straps that allow you to slide the pack onto a suitcase handle. Carry comfort is reasonable over shorter distances, but prepare to get a sweaty back if it's hot. **RS**
huubdesign.com



VERDICT Sleek, clever and versatile – a great pack for travelling to races.



BAM RUN SOCKS

£16 ★★★★★

It wouldn't be the Christmas edition without a pair of socks. These aren't the cheapest, but for smiles over many miles I'd definitely recommend them. These are eco-friendly and made from 50% Bamboo Viscose, 48% Recycled Polyamide and 2% Elastane giving them the sweat wicking and temperature moderating benefits of bamboo with stretch. **HW** bamboclothing.co.uk



VERDICT Superb socks, worth the money as they'll last and are eco-friendly to boot

PRECISION HYDRATION CRAMPER HAMPER

£29.99 ★★★★★

I've got to admit, I'm a sucker for a good bobble hat so when the festive 'cramper hamper' from Precision Hydration arrived at my door I was a very happy bunny. Snuggly headwear aside though, this is a really decent package for the triathlete in your life. As well as the hat you'll receive a 500ml sports bottle, a tube of PH 1500 electrolyte tabs, a PF 90 Energy Gel and two packs of energy chews. A great intro to the range for anyone who takes their sport seriously, Precision Hydration are gurus when it comes to matching your rehydration needs to your levels of sweating. Visit the website for a wealth of information on carbs and hydration for every athlete. **HW** precisionhydration.com



VERDICT Great little package and useful, too for the triathlete who like useful pressies!



KASK NIRVANA

£320 ★★★★★

The Nirvana debuted on the heads of Ineos Grenadiers in 2024, with the Italian brand making plenty of lofty aerodynamic claims (“the Nirvana offers a remarkable 35% reduction in aerodynamic drag and 19% increase in ventilation compared to the best aero helmets in its class”) about its new top-end aero helmet, but albeit without showing us the evidence so I was keen to give this one a try in person.

Onto the head and it's light (276g for a medium) for such an aero-focussed lid, with the unique ear tips likely to offer both speed and safety advantages... although the confined space here might well cause discomfort for those with larger ears. If you know you're that person, maybe see if you can try before you buy! The comfort offered by the internal Multipod padding, Kask's

lovely faux leather chinstrap and the Octofit retention system is excellent, while the airflow from the sizeable ventilation channels is impressive for a minimally vented lid. Where it suffers is on muggy days and at slower speeds, with the padding sub-par at storing sweat and not what I'd demand from a helmet with a £320 price tag. The front also crept into my line of vision when I was down lower using tri-bars.

If matching your bike matters to you the Kask Nirvana comes in black, white, cherry, blueberry (shown here) and ultraviolet, as well as in two sizes: 58cm and 62cm. A reflective graphic on the rear of the helmet gives a nod to visibility. **MB** [kask.com](https://www.kask.com)

78
%

VERDICT Light, fast and comfortable, but let down by poor padding and high price



BIMBLE AND BOLT SUPER STRIDER SHORTS

£44 ★★★★★

Running shorts? In the January issue? I've had these for a while though and for indoor training still have them on regular rotation, plus I think it's good to give smaller brands some love around all the festive spending. Bimble and Bolt make these shorts in two lengths (8 inch or 6 inch) which is music to my ears as someone who always finds women's run shorts alarmingly skimpy. I tried the 8 inch shorts in Teal (shown here, other colours online). They're made from 62% Recycled Nylon and 38% Spandex and stay put when working hard – no rolling up thank God – and include one zippy back pocket and side pockets. **HW** [bimbleandbolt.com](https://www.bimbleandbolt.com)

88
%

VERDICT Practical and nicely designed shorts with some good features



MATADOR BETALOCK

£28.45 ★★★★★

Looking for a pressie for the triathlete that has everything? This nifty carabiner is made from forged aircraft-grade aluminium (ooh!) and is pleasingly well-made. The unique feature? It comes with two keys so you can lock it shut – perfect for leaving sports kit unattended in public. I've used it to lock up a bike helmet and my swim kit bag while I was in a lake. **HW** [wildbound.com](https://www.wildbound.com)

85
%

VERDICT Nifty little gadget, you'll use it more than you expect to!



GROUPTEST:

LONG-SLEEVE RUN TEES

When winter starts to bite, you'll need a good long-sleeve base layer for your runs. We've tested eight of the best for men and women to find the one for you...

WORDS MATT BAIRD & HELEN WEBSTER

MAIN IMAGE GETTY IMAGES KIT IMAGES ALFIE BAIRD & HELEN WEBSTER

Humble it may be, but a good long-sleeved run tee is essential in any outdoor athlete's kit drawer. Come the chillier months, you'll be looking towards one of these for warmth and comfort, as well as visibility if not wearing a jacket.

When it comes to testing, there are a few things we look out for. Comfort is high, as is fit. You also want your top to be light enough for performance, but snugly enough that you feel warm when the mercury drops.

Our testers also look for technical features. Did the tops wick sweat away effectively – and did the fabric still smell fresh after one or multiple runs? If you can get away with a couple of runs without washing, not only is it easier for you but also kinder on the environment. Mentioning the environment, we also like to see recycled or sustainable fabrics.

Although we used two testers here – one male and one female – most of these tops come in men's and women's versions and colourways. Finally we considered value for money and any additional features such as a quarter-length zip, key pocket and thumb loops. ▶

MONTANE DART LITE LONG SLEEVE T-SHIRT

£50



montane.com

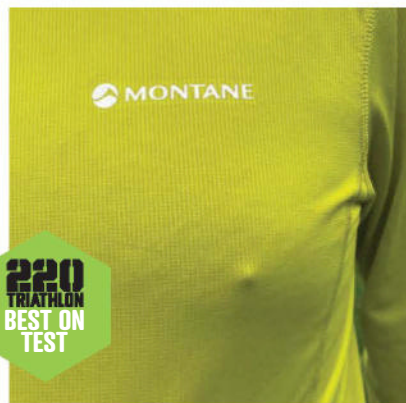
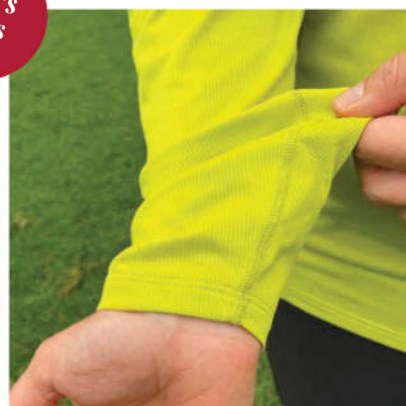
Montane bill the Dart Lite Long Sleeve T-Shirt as a base layer, but I've happily been wearing it as a standalone top in the UK autumn. I've regularly relished its lightness, (a 120g for a men's medium). Internal comfort is excellent. The flatlock seams have remained irritation-free, while the 100% recycled polyester is soft on the skin. The crew neck is comfortable, while the fit felt true to the sizing chart. This boasts a Polygiene permanent odour control. Ventilation is impressive and the Dart Lite has proven both quick-to-dry and breathable when worn under a jacket. The sleeves roll up and sizes range from XS to XXXL, with a range of colourways in men's/women's versions.



VERDICT Light, eco and breathable. This top delivers the goods as both a base layer and run top



Men's
tees



ASICS CORE LS TOP

£32

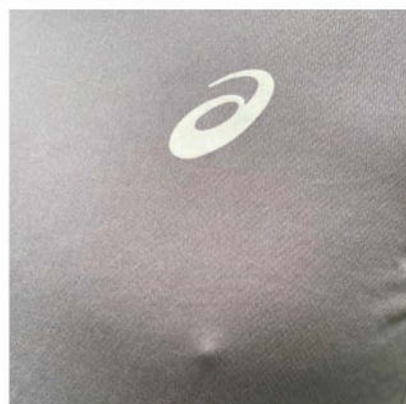


asics.com

The Core LS Top might not boast a long feature list but it's a functional, well-crafted and stylish top that largely ticks the performance boxes. Coming in at a lean 113g, it sits smoothly on the skin, aided by its flatlock seam construction and a 100% polyester build that's floaty and unrestrictive. Ventilation from the slightly meshed material is decent enough. The 100% recycled materials help with the Core's eco credentials, although it's lacking an odour control feature. At £32, however, the Core is neatly-priced and the construction feels durable enough for multi-running season use. Sizing comes in at XS-2XL and our medium felt true to size. More visible colours are available too in both men's and women's sizing.



VERDICT Not the techiest but functional, decently priced and comfortable base layer



KEELA TRAIL PRO L/S TOP WITH STAYFRESH

£34.95

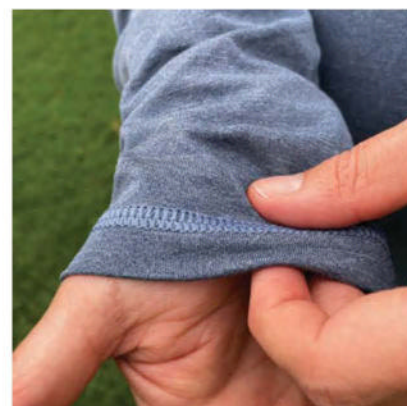


keelaoutdoors.com

There's plenty of tech for the price tag here. First up is the Polygiene Stayfresh technology, which promises built-in odour control so you can 'wear your tee for multiple wears without washing'. The addition of 9% spandex/Lycra in the polyester mix seems to give the Trail Pro more stretch than a classic 100% polyester top. The breathability and sweat-wicking abilities are impressive, making this one that can handle both base layer and standalone running top duties. No claims are made of any recycled materials in the mix. Sizes are 2XS – 3XL and I found the medium here fairly sizeable. The 161g weight is noticeably heavier than the Asics and Montane, but it scrunches down well.



VERDICT Decent materials, price and performance make this a versatile contender in this test



ALPKIT LAIKA

£49.99



alpkit.com

The Laika from Alpkit is billed as a 'performance mid-layer'. I've loved it for hiking on cooler days but the thickness and lack of ventilation make it less than ideal for higher intensity activities. The Laika is lighter than it looks at 191g and it stashes down. The 1/2 length zip does offer some temperature regulation benefits, but there are no ventilation channels or mesh areas of note, making this more winter wear than spring or autumn. Further weather-battling features include its knit finish for added cosiness and wind protection, a high collar and a full-length zipper guard for further wind deflection. Points are scored for the 100% recycled polyester construction, however, and the Polygiene treatment is holding firm against smells!



VERDICT Soft and cosy for hiking, but it only has a limited window for running use hence the score here



ALPKIT
KOULIN

£29.99

alpkit.com



The Laika on the previous page was deemed great for hiking but a bit warm for running – so Alpkit have a second bite of the cherry here with the lighter weight Koulin. Coming in at 145g for my women's UK14, this is already lighter in weight and is constructed from wicking and fast-drying recycled polyester fabric featuring Polygiene anti-odour technology. The fit was great on me and the mesh under the arms provided reasonable ventilation. I also managed to get away with a few runs before I felt like this top needed a wash so the fabric definitely works! There's a nifty key pouch with loop and sizing is good at 6-20 with two colours available. Men can choose from three colours and XS-XXL.

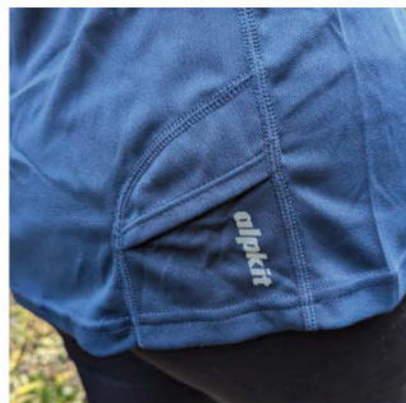


VERDICT Good solid tee with some features that are a bonus at the price point. Decent price, too



220
TRIATHLON
BUDGET
BUY

Women's
tees

SOAR
TEMPO

£155

soarrunning.com



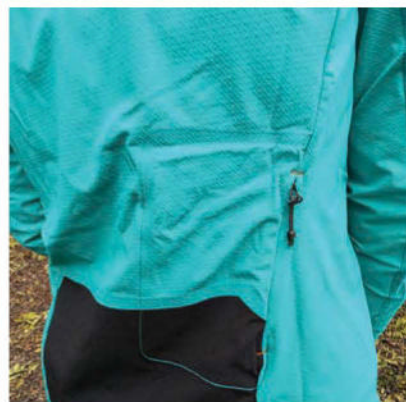
At just 136g for my size XL (I'm a UK14, but Soar comes up small and this is the largest size – (our model here could size down) this unusual base layer is amazingly light for its features. The 3D textured weave fabric has a slight stretch and is brilliantly breathable – the Tempo is designed to be worn over a light base layer or alone next to the skin and I found it comfortable either way, with the full-length zip adding to the versatility. The seams are bonded and comfortable and though there is no zip garage, I didn't notice any irritation. At the back there's a decent pocket for keys/gels which is welcome. The price tag is high, yes, but this is a top that is beautifully-made and functional. Men get sizing in XS to XL.



VERDICT This is a top I'll use again and again and I love the fabric and feel. Larger sizes would be good



220
TRIATHLON
CUTTING
EDGE



INOV8 MERINO L/S

£60



inov8.com

Oooh, merino wool... This is one of those tops that you love from the moment you pull it on, thanks to that fabric. Northern trail gurus Inov8 have constructed this from ethically-produced mulesing-free Merino wool certified by the Responsible Wool Standard. It comes in sizes 6-14 for women (again, larger sizes would be good to see here) and S-XL for men and two colours. It's breathable and naturally resists odours, something that I can confirm through testing! Sizing is snug but the top has plenty of stretch. Designed for hiking it might be a bit warm for hard sessions, but for my morning jogs on frosty autumn mornings I didn't overheat. This one comes in at 144g for my UK14.



VERDICT Blimmin' lovely top made from superior fabric. Maybe a bit warm for fast runs though, so save for the chill!



COMPRESSPORT PERFORMANCE L/S

£70



compressport.com

This long-sleeved, thermo-regulating performance top has integrated ventilation with some mesh panels as well as a woven fabric which felt light and cool against the skin. It's made from 52% Polyamide 44% Polyester 4% Elastane and came in at 138g for my size large. Again sizing is limited here, with XS-L available for women and S-XXL for men. On mild autumn runs I really liked how this top felt against the skin and it was among the cooler and most breathable on test, plus the flexible fabric made the sleeves easy to roll up when I got a bit warm. On cooler days it worked well under a short-sleeved tee or light jacket. No pockets are included and thumb loops on the long sleeves would have been welcome. **220**



VERDICT Nice top that is comfy and I liked the fabric. Quite expensive though compared to others on test





GROUPTEST: CHANGING ROBES

Invaluable after winter training, a good changing robe is warm, waterproof and versatile. Which of these eight wins this year's best on test though?

WORDS HELEN WEBSTER IMAGES GAVIN PARISH

There are few pieces of kit that have exploded in popularity in recent years like the humble changing robe. Love 'em or loathe 'em, these voluminous, furry coats are now seen on everyone from professional athletes to dog walkers, open-water swimmers to folk popping to the supermarket.

With popularity comes choice however and there are plenty out there to pick from. In this month's group test are eight that have arrived at 220 Towers over the last few weeks, from new launches to existing designs with updates.

I've chosen a range which offers a variety of options, from lightweight packable robes to big puffy coats designed for maximum warmth. The options here are all good quality too and I've tried to include ones which offer good environmental credentials and use of recycled or sustainable materials.

As a triathlete you'll likely be buying one for use after training, so my advice is to think about the kind of places you usually train. Do you often end up drinking coffee from a Thermos

outdoors after an open-water swim or a chilly ride or run? In which case, think about finding a robe which is warm as well as waterproof.

Room to actually change in is important too. I mainly use my robes after swimming, so I need to be able to get dried and clothed quickly inside mine. I also prefer a lining which is warm but which doesn't cling to damp skin.

Think about other features you might want. Pockets are handy and there are extras which can be nice to have including a giant pocket to stash your robe inside (or a bag), zip-off sleeves for versatility and a draw-cord at the waist if you want to cinch the coat in for warmth and a more fitted look.

Turn the page for this year's reviews – but head to 220triathlon.com to find plenty more changing robes reviewed and rated as well. ▶

D-ROBE BEAUFORT ROBE £155

★★★★★

d-robeoutdoors.com

This is the second time I've tried the Beaufort, here in a snazzy new Opal Grey colourway. I sized up this time though having found they come up quite small and though this time the coat fit comfortably (size medium and I'm a UK14) it was a slim not oversized fit and I didn't have room to easily change inside – the coat comes in unisex XS to XL though so just one to be aware of. That said, this was a very warm and cosy robe with a fleece lining and superb protection against the elements with taped seams, a waterproofed outer and a storm flap. Large fleece pockets and a removable valuables pouch are a nice touch. The robe is made from 100% recycled materials and comes in five colours plus smaller versions for kids.



VERDICT Chunky and solid protection from the elements – quite a slim fit though, so size up for changing



DDIPP SEA MONSTER HYDRO £150

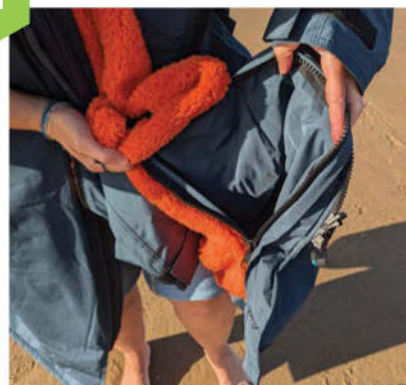
★★★★★

ddipp.com

The Sea Monster has the coolest name in the change robe market but this is also my personal favourite. It's the third time I've tested ddipp's flagship product and here in a new colourway, I'm reminded again how brilliant it is. The robe hits the sweet spot between warmth and protection from the elements while still being warm enough to care for you after a chilly swim. It's not that bulky, stashes inside its own pocket and has the softest fleece fur inside. I love the sleeves which can be zipped off at the elbow to make it more practical for changing in (or just less warm, depending). Fabrics are 100% recycled and the Sea Monster is waterproof yet breathable. Mine is a S/M, also available in M/L.



VERDICT I use changing robes a lot and for a couple of years, this has remained the one I reach for first. Just great!



DRY ROBE REMIX £165

★★★★★

dryrobe.com

What can we say about the classic Dryrobe Advance that hasn't already been said...? Well, luckily the brand keep subtly tweaking their original designs just enough to allow us to give them space in the mag once again. We last saw this version in trendy camo and pink, but this new 'Remix' is one of a few versions which use surplus fabrics to create new designs – here black with a pink lining and camo touches. What stays the same is the voluminous shape with plenty of room to change inside, the snugly hood, easy to operate chunky zip and large pockets and velcro sleeves. You also get an inner pocket for valuables and from personal experience, these robes last years – and all fabrics here are 100% recycled, too.

93
%

VERDICT You won't go wrong with a classic Dryrobe and this eco limited edition version ticks all the boxes



220
TRIATHLON
HIGHLY
RATED

RED PURSUIT £209.95

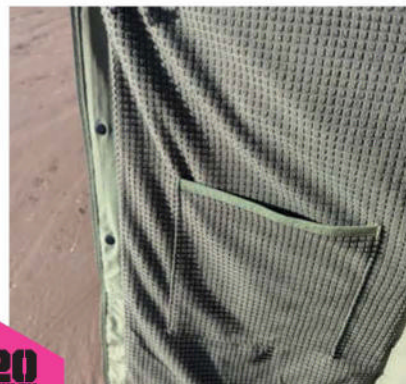
★★★★★

red-equipment.co.uk

Breaking the mould in this category, the Red Pursuit is more of a high quality raincoat when you first see it – but that's the genius of the design. Two long side zips plus a waist cord undo to reveal enough extra fabric and room to easily change within. The jacket is also light and easily packable, perfect if you tend to carry your robe around a lot, or are prone to having impulsive swims mid-hike (I do this a lot!). Quality touches like 'sticklebrick' cuff adjusters and an inner wicking fleece are all welcome. I'd say this is perfect if you want a changing robe that is practical and versatile, but without actually looking like a changing robe. The only downside is it won't give you the warmth of the bigger, snugglier ones on test.

91
%

VERDICT Cutting edge design which expertly combines a stylish coat with changing needs, just not the warmest



220
TRIATHLON
CUTTING
EDGE

PASSENGER TEMPEST £155



passenger-clothing.com

Arriving with a nifty matching stuff sack, the Tempest was winning points for portability from the start. We've included the Waves version in a previous test (see online) but this one is designed, as the name suggests, with more inclement weather in mind. The robe is constructed from 100% recycled polyester 50D ripstop, with a PFC DWR water-resistant coating and did well in showers during testing. Passenger cite it being able to withstand an hour in a sustained shower. The cosy lining is 100% recycled polyester sherpa fleece and I enjoyed using this one in testing as it was a nice balance between warmth and weight. More zipped pockets would be nice though and the front zip was a touch fiddly with cold hands.



VERDICT Impressively eco-friendly but only in muted colours and zip could be sturdier. Good waterproofing though!



VOITED ROBE & DRYCOAT £135



voited.co.uk

This was my first time trying out a Voited robe and it's fair to say it was an instant hit – both with me and with other swimmers who took a shine to it at the lake where I swim! That's no surprise though, as the quilted body of the coat is like wearing a lightweight snugly sleeping bag, while an extra layer of fleecy insulation around the lumbar area keeps the core warm. It's water resistant too and made from eco-friendly materials, while the lining is made from a microfibre fleece which was superb for getting changed inside and didn't cling to my damp body like some of the furrier options. Generous pockets (four outside, plus zippy inner) are welcome. It comes in six colours and sizes XS–XL and felt like great value.



VERDICT Very warm changing coat with well-considered features and a lovely quilted inner for warmth



**220
TRIATHLON
BEST
VALUE**

VIVIDA ALL WEATHER SHERPA £165 ★★★★★

vividalifestyle.com

Vivida last entered by kit testing rota back in 2022's changing robe test with their pouffy All Weather Puffa robe (£240), still on sale, which is akin to wearing a duvet as a changing robe (see online for full review). Here is the All Weather Sherpa version. This one's a more traditional shell version, made with 100% recycled materials and with a PFC-free water repellent coating as well as taped seams that I found did a great job of keeping me dry in showers. The synthetic lambswool sherpa fleece lining kept me warm, while the adjustable hood was good in downpours. This one packed down smaller than the Puffa version and comes in an impressive six earthly colours and five sizes. I'm wearing a medium here.



VERDICT Nice-looking robe with good waterproofing and eco-friendly fabrics – though not many other extras



ZONE 3 THERMO-TECH £149 ★★★★★

zone3.com

We've seen the Thermo-tech before on the pages of 220, but even though the spec hasn't changed neither has the price tag, which is good news for triathletes as this is a superb robe from a brand with its roots in triathlon. Many will like the understated looks here (it only comes in khaki or black with yellow, so one for those not into brighter hues!) and the 100% recycled fabric is water and wind resistant but also breathable and I've found it works well on grotty days post-swim. Sleeves are adjustable via velcro straps and there are some good zippy pockets to keep valuables safe. Changing inside is relatively straightforward, aided by flexible side panels. Unisex sizing is XS to XL, I'm in a medium here. **220**



VERDICT Not my first choice looks-wise, but warm and weather-proof and has some nice extra features





GROUPTTEST: SWIM JAMMERS

A durable pair of jammers (or two) are essential for swim training in the pool or open water. Which of these five are best for triathletes?

WORDS JACK SIXTY LEAD IMAGE GETTY IMAGES

Shorts, baggies, trunks jammers, speedos, budgies... Yep, there are many names for the humble swim shorts. But these are all slightly different and what you choose will depend on how streamlined you want to be, what you prefer in terms of feel and how brave you are...

Jammers are a good option for most athletes. Sitting just above the knee they are designed to have a snug, athletic fit to reduce drag through the water, and it goes without saying that if they feel too loose or too tight – especially at the waist – then you should size up or down accordingly.

The leg grippers on most jammers end just above the knee, but you can also get mid-length jammers that finish in the middle of the thigh. What you choose is mostly down to personal preference and what you feel most comfortable in; although if milliseconds of drag reduction is important to you, then a fuller length jammer should be slightly more hydrodynamic.

A good drawstring is important for adjusting your jammers, as is a well-designed waistband to provide a secure, comfortable fit and stop them from slipping. I favour wide drawstrings that are easy to grab and don't get frayed over time.

Your jammers shouldn't ride up or be at all baggy, and if that's the case then it may just be that you need to size

down. I have experienced material getting baggy or loose around the legs over time on jammers of questionable quality, but that is unlikely to be an issue with the construction techniques utilised by most reputable swimming and triathlon brands in 2024.

If you want to take things outside somewhere hot, you may want to look for jammers that offer a high UPF (ultraviolet protection factor) rating to avoid burning under your jammers. Not all manufacturers state this in the product descriptions, but brands such as Funky Trunks offer a UPF rating of 50+ in all of its garments.

The material used in swim jammers will almost always be polyester, but designed with a mix of chlorine-resistant and stretchy variations so they work for swimming. Look for jammers that are said to be 100% chlorine-resistant if you have any doubts about durability. It's also advisable to hand wash and keep machine washing to a minimum while avoiding the tumble dryer to prolong their life.

Some brands have their own proprietary materials that they may claim is more durable and resistant to chlorine, and increasingly there's an environmental reason too. All brands in our 2024 jammers group test have published sustainability statements, and numerous pairs use recycled materials. ▶

FUNKY TRUNKS STAR SIGN £35.95

★★★★★

funkytrunks.co.uk

Australian-born swimwear specialist Funky Trunks has become renowned for out-there designs, which are digitally printed to cause minimal environmental impact during the production process. While Funky Trunks also produce 'Elite' and 'Amateur' competition jammers, the 'Training' range that these sit in prioritises durability, practicality and comfort. Prices are about the going rate for good-quality training jammers, and it's worth keeping tabs on the Funky Trunks website for occasional flash sales.

Putting them on is a bit more of a battle than stretchier alternatives, meaning it's important to get the right size, because they will slip if they're too small. After addressing that issue I found these jammers fine for long training sessions. I like the long cut which sits just above the knee, the waistband and leg grippers are comfortable and the drawcord is nice and chunky. The 'front pouch lining' is fully stitched in, which cuts down on bulk and keeps everything covered that needs covering. After several washes, the colours are just as vivid and there has been no shrinkage or fraying, so I'm confident that Funky Trunks' jammers and the exclusive C-Infinity fabric will last you for many swims. I think they're most suitable for those with an athletic build who don't fall between sizes, because there isn't that much give in them should they not fit perfectly.

78%

VERDICT Bold, colourful and durable, but I'd like a little more stretch. Make sure you buy the right size!



ZOGGS GLARE PANELLED MID JAMMER

£38

★★★★★

zoggs.com

The Glare is part of Zoggs' range of mid-length jammers, designed to sit somewhere around the mid-thigh area and slightly lower than a pair of trunks. If you're stubby-legged like me then you might find some longer jammers are a little too long, so the mid-jammer offers a decent solution. Zoggs' 100% chlorine-proof Ecolast+ fabric that makes up these jammers is made from recycled bottles, and a lifetime guarantee if your jammers somehow wear out shows the Aussie brand is very confident in the durability of its products. A triangular front lining and a robust drawstring keeps everything secure, and the flatlock seams are perfectly stitched to avoid any chafing or irritation. I've previously praised the waistband of Zoggs' mid jammers, and while it's comfortable enough I find that it's not quite up there with the chunkier one on Speedo's End+ Max Compression mid jammer. I found the latter (admittedly £12 more expensive) sit better on my hips without feeling at all like they'll slip, while I need to take a bit more care to ensure the Zoggs jammers are fitted properly before diving in. The legs also lack a bit of stretch, and I found some repositioning was required to stop them riding up in the water after pushing off or turning on the wall. However they're very durable, have notable eco credentials and are reasonably priced.

79%

VERDICT Do the job, but I'd like a beefier waistband. Appreciate the durability and eco credentials



SPEEDO END+ MAX COMPRESSION MID

£50

★★★★★

speedo.com

The End+ Max Compression Mid from Speedo is designed to come down to around the mid-thigh, which is ideal for those who may find the grippers on some longer jammers sit too close to their knees. Part of Speedo's performance range, these jammers have a few extra bells and whistles compared to basic training suits, such as the 'V-Cut' design with a 'power mesh' liner. Essentially this is reinforced, V-shaped panelling on both thighs to provide some extra support, and I felt like there was some more compressive benefits in this area compared to entry-level jammers through the water. I am a fan of the built in front lining and extra chunky, silicone gripper elasticated waistband, that is very easy to grab to get the jammers in place before setting off on your swim. Couple with a robust flat drawstring, I could be 100% confident these jammers weren't budging an inch in the water, and they always stayed in place perfectly. Speedo says the End+ Max Compression Mid is made for "long lasting performance", while falling short of claiming 100% chlorine resistance; but after a few washes and several thousand metres in the pool, I have no reason to doubt that they're very durable. For a performance product, I think these jammers actually represent very good value, and are ideal for training or dipping your toe in master's swimming competitions.

90%

VERDICT Affordable performance jammers that are very well made and I liked the print on these!



220
TRIATHLON
HIGHLY
RATED

COOTS SG JAMMER £110

★★★★★

coots-london.com

Fledgling London-based swimwear brand Coots (an acronym for 'Crawled out of the sea') designs and makes everything locally, with a big emphasis on sustainability. The SG Jammers are made with 78% Econyl nylon generated from waste product, and the rest is elastane. They're ultra chlorine-resistant, have shape-retaining qualities, and there's a lifetime repair guarantee if any stitching comes loose during your suit's lifecycle. They arrive in a wet bag made from bamboo towelling, and there's even a locker loop inside to help with drying. The full leg coverage and streamlined fit made me feel fast through the water, and the chunky yet comfy waistline and robust drawstring meant they didn't budge an inch during lengthy pool sessions. They have silicone leg grippers, reminiscent of tri or cycling shorts, that hug the leg perfectly, and they haven't got baggy or loose after multiple washes. The full internal lining, essentially acting like briefs stitched onto the main part of the garment, is comfortable and keeps everything in place, but does add some weight. I don't think this makes any discernible difference to the hydrodynamic properties, but I'd like to see some alternative, high performance Coots jammers in future, perhaps with a fully stitched gusset or just a front liner. I've been mighty impressed with the SGs and they're my current favourites!

92%

VERDICT Excellent premium jammers that get almost everything right. The quality justifies the price tag



220
TRIATHLON
BEST ON
TEST

HUUB BROWNLEE JAMMER II – JONNY

£39.99

★★★★★

huubdesign.com

The Brownlee Jammer II is available in Ali or Jonny flavours (of course) and it's the more colourful Jonny version I'm reviewing here. I like the long cut of the leg which is designed to sit just above the knee. The outer is made up of 53% standard polyester and 47% PBT, the latter included for its durability, sustainability and resistance to chlorine. It's worth mentioning that this material doesn't do particularly well in warm water, so avoid a post-swim hot tub to prolong the life of your jammers. There is a sizeable yet lightweight lining to provide coverage at the front, and the drawstring is nice and chunky to fine-tune the fit. There's nothing special going on at the waistline or lower legs, just dependable flatlock seams that do the job and didn't irritate my skin during long pool sessions. They didn't budge at all during the test swims, remaining comfortable throughout and keeping their shape after multiple swims and washes. The Brownlee jammers sized up bigger than others on test, with the small fitting me just right (suitable for 29–31 inch waists according to the size guide). It's worth checking the size guide because the material isn't super stretchy, and likewise if you go too small an embarrassing tear could be more likely in these jammers compared to stretchier alternatives. If you get the sizing right, these are great training jammers.

86%

VERDICT Durable, colourful jammers that are great for pool training, just consider sizing down for fit



JACK'S OVERALL VERDICT

Of the five pairs of jammers I reviewed for this grouptest, thankfully there were none that I would completely avoid with all getting very good or excellent scores.

£30–£40 seems to be the going rate for a new season pair of jammers made for everyday training nowadays, and offerings from Funky Trunks, Zoggs and Huub fit into this category. Of those three I would personally choose the Huub Brownlee II, because I found they offer more stretch to achieve the perfect fit.

Speedo's End+ Max Compression Mid really impressed me, even though I don't usually go for mid-length jammers. I liked the V-shape panelling and it's nice to be able to get some performance features at a price point that is closer to what you'd pay for training jammers.

I wasn't sure what to expect from Coots, a relative newcomer in the swimwear market compared to the other four established brands; but it's safe to say I was very pleasantly surprised. Yes, they cost more than double that of Speedo's offering, but the quality of the product and the excellent construction means I think they're worth it, and they have fast become my go-to jammers.

HOW I TESTED

To conduct my testing, I simply swam a lot for the most part. I spent some time making adjustments and ensuring the jammers fit me correctly before hitting the pool so nothing was marked down unfairly.

My swims mostly involved lengthy endurance freestyle sets: all the fun stuff like 20x100, 6x200 build and daunting pyramids. A bit because I'm a glutton for punishment and it's what I gravitate towards, but importantly because main sets like these are the foundation of any good triathlon swim training plan. This allowed me to feel what the jammers were like over a long session, in terms of offering support and speed benefits through the water, plus what the fit was like. **220**

ESSENTIAL KIT

All you need to train & race, as rated by our 220 Kit Zone expert testers

TOP-END WETSUITS

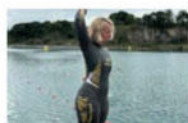
If your goal is to exit T1 first, you'll want a suit that strikes the balance between flexibility, buoyancy and comfort, while also being super easy to remove on the fly.



Orca Apex Flex
★★★★★
£589 Soft and flexible; ideal for good swimmers.
Issue 432
orca.com



Yonda Ghost 3
★★★★★
£589 Impressive mix of flexibility and buoyancy.
Issue 417
yondasports.com



Sailfish G-Range 8
★★★★★
£691 Unrivalled freedom and the fastest on test.
Issue 432
sailfish.com



Zone3 Vanquish X
★★★★★
£699 A dizzying array of tech put to good use.
Issue 432
zone3.com



Zoggs Hypex Ultra FS
★★★★★
£700 Incredibly supple; improved hydrodynamics.
Issue 432
zoggs.com

BUDGET WETSUITS

Always try before you buy as sizes can vary massively between brands. Then consider your swim ability, as some features may be lost on newbies (e.g. thin neoprene and reduced buoyancy).



Van Rysel SD Neoprene
★★★★★
£119.99 A great option for shorter distances.
Issue 406
decathlon.co.uk



Lomo Nuotare
★★★★★
£125 Price, comfort and inclusive sizing combine.
Issue 422
lomo.co.uk



Speedo Proton
★★★★★
£140 A crazy price for a suit that performs so well.
Issue 417
speedo.com



Zone3 Aspect
★★★★★
£179 Performs well and is breaststroke specific.
Issue 429
zone3.com



Orca Athlex Float
★★★★★
£239 Great movement and buoyancy.
Issue 417
orca.com

POOL GOGGLES

When shopping for a new pair, consider tint to deal with bright lighting, width of vision and comfort to ensure a fuss-free swim.



Orca Killa Speed
★★★★★
£17 Sleek goggles with a choice of nose bridges.
Issue 427
orca.com



Zoggs Predator
★★★★★
£25 Great price and size range; no leaks or fogging.
Issue 427
zoggs.com



Tri-Fit Rapid-X
★★★★★
£30 Superb visibility; soft and comfy gaskets.
Issue 427
tri-fitathletic.com



Roka R1 Clear
★★★★★
£32 Superb all-round visibility. Great fit, too.
Issue 427
ukroka.com



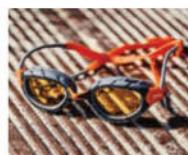
Zone3 Volare
★★★★★
£35 Great, comfy fit, plus polarised lenses.
Issue 427
zone3.com

OPEN-WATER GOGGLES

Outdoor swimming goggles should ideally have mirrored or polarised lenses for greater clarity. Often the lenses are bigger, too, for greater peripheral vision.



Orca Killa Comfort
★★★★★
£24 Comfortable, great visibility and an impressive price. Good stuff.
Issue 430
orca.com



Zoggs Predator Ultra
★★★★★
£38 A true classic and top performance from the polarized lenses.
Issue 430
zoggs.com



The Magic5 Blue Mirror Gold
★★★★★
£75 Made-to-measure goggles that deliver near perfection.
Issue 430
themagic5.com



Aquasphere Defy.Ultra
★★★★★
£129.99 Elevating swim masks to a new level. But at quite a price.
Issue 430
uk.aquasphereswim.com



Form Smart Swim 2
★★★★★
£229 Unique tech that offers real benefits for pool and open water.
Issue 430
formswim.com

COLD-WATER SWIM KIT

Adding neoprene accessories can make your winter swimming much less biting, so consider swim caps, gloves and socks.



Lomo Open Water Socks
★★★★★
£21 Good breadth of sizing, plus appreciated grippers to avoid slipping.
Issue 425
lomo.co.uk



Orca Thermal Cap
★★★★★
£35 Warm and plenty of flex; great thermal lining for the price.
Issue 425
orca.com



Zone3 Heat-Tech Gloves
★★★★★
£39 Toasty and great grip. Liquid-seal finish ensures snug fit.
Issue 425
zone3.com



Zone3 Heat-Tech Socks
★★★★★
£39 You can't argue with the warmth and waterproofing here.
Issue 425
zone3.com



2XU Propel Gloves
★★★★★
£45 Cosy pair of gloves with superb grip. Just check the size fits you.
Issue 425
uk.2xu.com

TURBO TRAINERS

Turbo trainers range from the traditional A-frame design to smart trainers that sync to online training platforms like Zwift and Rouvy.



Tacx Flow
★★★★★
£299.99 Simple set up, impressively quiet and a great price.
Issue 426
garmin.com



Wahoo Kickr Core
★★★★★
£549.99 Capable and quiet. Comes with 12 months of Zwift, too.
Issue 415
uk.wahoofitness.com



Saris H3
★★★★★
£749.99 Feature packed and accurate. Often heavily discounted.
Issue 426
saris.com



Elite Justo
★★★★★
£999.99 'Flex Feet' provides a natural ride feel and relatively light at 17kg.
Issue 426
elite-it.com



Wahoo Kickr Move
★★★★★
£1,399.99 A very good high-end trainer, but needs tweaking. Pricey.
Issue 426
uk.wahoofitness.com

TRIATHLON BIKES

The key here is fit and comfort. Remember: the least aerodynamic thing on the bike is you, so have a bike fit to refine your position.



Argon 18 E119 Tri+ Disc
★★★★★
£7,300 This is a fast, aggressive triathlon superbike with plenty of impressive innovation.
See 220triathlon.com
argon18.com



Orro Venturi Tri
★★★★★
£5,950 Climbs purposefully, handles like a road bike and is pretty damn fast.
Issue 421
orrobikes.com



Cube Aerium C:68X SLT
★★★★★
£8,999 A blisteringly fast, cutting-edge tri superbike with a bonus hydration option.
Issue 428
cube.eu



Canyon Speedmax CFR Disc
★★★★★
£12,949 Blisteringly fast and the best integration we've seen on a triathlon bike.
Issue 388
canyon.com



Trek Speed Concept SLR 9 AXS
★★★★★
£13,000 Fast and compliant, with disc brakes and all mod cons.
See 220triathlon.com
trekbikes.com

AEROBARS

You provide around 80% of the drag you endure on the bike. That's why a pair of clip-on aerobars is vital for a streamlined performance.



Van Rysel Aptonia
★★★★★
£39.99 Incredible-value aerobars that though aimed at long distance are better for short course.
Issue 431
decathlon.co.uk



BBB Aerobase
★★★★★
£64.95 Well-shaped extensions and range make these a smart clip-on introduction.
Issue 420
bbbicycling.com



Profile Design Sonic Ergo 39A
★★★★★
£149.99 Versatile, good-value clip-ons that are easily fitted. A multitude of configurations.
Issue 431
profile-design-eu.com



Profile Design Subsonic Ergo 35A
★★★★★
£179.99 Great for those looking to go very low, but standard Sonics have broader appeal.
Issue 420
profile-design-eu.com



Deda Elementi Superzero Extensions
★★★★★
£207.99 Well-crafted and lightweight. Their stubby design isn't for all.
Issue 420
dedaelementi.com

TRI BIKE SHOES

Triathlon bike shoes are subtly, but importantly, different than cycling shoes as they contain features for a swift transition. Heel loop, rapid closure system and sole drainage holes are some of the multisport features.



Van Rysel Aptonia
★★★★★
£79.99 A solid shoe and a good price, though the jury's out regarding the closure zipper.
Issue 428
decathlon.co.uk



Mavic Cosmic Elite Tri
★★★★★
£165 Comfortable shape, fine closure system and nice big pull tab for fast transitions.
Issue 428
mavic.com



DMT KT1
★★★★★
£249.99 Phenomenal comfort, impressive breathability and very supportive.
Issue 428
chickencyclekit.co.uk



Fizik Transiro Hydra Aeroweave Carbon
★★★★★
£289.99 A fine shoe with numerous tri-friendly features, but pricey.
Issue 428
fizik.com



Mavic Ultimate Tri
★★★★★
£385 Wonderfully stiff and breathable shoe but cost hard to justify for the majority.
Issue 428
mavic.com

HELMETS

Helmets are divided into road, aero road and aero. Each has its attributes, from greater ventilation to lowering drag. Note: if you go full-on aero, those benefits are lost if you can't maintain an aero position.



Van Rysel FCR
★★★★★
£89.99 Solid aero performance and plenty of race-friendly features.
Issue 431
decathlon.co.uk



Met Estro MIPS
★★★★★
£120 A lean and stylish mid-range lid with added safety benefits.
Issue 412
met-helmets.com



Giro Eclipse Spherical
★★★★★
£239.99 Great fitting mechanism and slick dial for a comfy fit.
Issue 431
giro.com



Specialized S-Works Evade 3
★★★★★
£250 Fast, streamlined and comfortable. One of the best out there.
Issue 431
specialized.com



Abus Gamechanger 2
★★★★★
£289 One of the safest helmets out there plus solid aero credentials.
Issue 431
upgradebikes.co.uk

HEADPHONES

Sound quality's integral to any set of headphones but, when it comes to triathlon, safety plays a big part, too. Cue bone-conduction headphones, plus options for swimming.



Shokz OpenRun
★★★★★
£129.95 Quality option that lets you hear the surrounding area, too.
Issue 403
uk.shokz.com



H2O Audio Sonar Pro
★★★★★
£147 Swim-specific option with great sound and comfort.
Issue 422
h2oaudio.com



Suunto Wing
★★★★★
£169 Solid sound for an out-of-ear headphone; LED lights boost visibility.
Issue 425
suunto.com



Shokz OpenSwim
★★★★★
£169.95 Another swim-specific pair that does a solid job.
Issue 422
uk.shokz.com



Shokz OpenFit
★★★★★
£179 Great sound and comfy, but easier to hear surroundings with others.
Issue 423
uk.shokz.com

TRAIL RUNNING SHOES

A good trail shoe features a breathable upper to aid drainage. Good traction's also vital for staying upright on undulating and muddy terrain.



Nike Pegasus Trail 4
★★★★★
£129.95 Flexible and decent traction, albeit not aggressive enough for proper muddy trails.
Issue 425
sportsshoes.com



Saucony Peregrine 13
★★★★★
£130 If you're looking for an all-rounder that offers good value and decent performance, this is it.
Issue 425
saucony.com



Inov-8 Roclite G 275 V2
★★★★★
£135 A bulletproof trail shoe that's well-suited to wintry conditions and offers reasonable value.
Issue 425
inov-8.com



La Sportiva Cyklon
★★★★★
£170 A wonderful, technical trail shoe with great traction and the reliable BOA dial.
Issue 425
lasportiva.com



Hoka Tecton X 2
★★★★★
£185 An enjoyable, propulsive yet stable ride, though not perfect in deep, wet mud.
Issue 425
hoka.com

MILEAGE RUN SHOES

Your off-season running should include a weekly long run for aerobic conditioning, albeit don't forget occasional speedwork. All of these should fit the bill.



Inov-8 Roadfly
★★★★★
£100 If you are after the same connection you feel on the trail on the road, this is for you.
Issue 435
inov8.com



Nike Pegasus 41
★★★★★
£128.99 A reliable option for easy miles, as long as you don't mind the high heel-to-toe drop.
Issue 435
sportsshoes.com



Brooks Ghost 2 Max
★★★★★
£145 A reliable, super comfortable and robust shoe that will do wonders for your road running.
Issue 435
brooksrunning.com



New Balance Fresh Foam 1080
★★★★★
£160 The Fresh Foam 1080 is an excellent shoe for racking up gentle miles in supreme comfort.
Issue 435
newbalance.co.uk



Saucony Endorphin Speed 4
★★★★★
£180 A versatile, comfy and impressive shoe that's primed for pushing the pace and easy runs.
Issue 435
saucony.com

RUN JACKETS

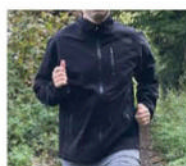
A good run jacket will fend off the elements like wind and rain, but also deliver breathability so you don't boil in the bag. Reflectives, a hood and pockets add to its usefulness.



Keela Saxon Jacket
★★★★★
£109.95 Versatile and well-priced jacket, but not one for hotter or high-tempo runs.
Issue 436
keelaoutdoors.com



Montane Cetus Lite
★★★★★
£270 Great for deflecting winds and rain, but more for hiking than for running.
Issue 436
montane.com



Soar All-weather jacket
★★★★★
£350 It's hard to ignore that price, but this is a formidable jacket for battling the weather.
Issue 436
salomon.com



Asics Core jacket
★★★★★
£54 Lightweight, affordable and stylish, but not for running in really wet conditions.
Issue 436
asics.com



INOV-8 Performance Hybrid
★★★★★
£150 A well-crafted, durable and comfortable jacket. Huge versatility makes the price a bargain.
Issue 436
inov8.com

HEART RATE MONITORS

These chest or armband straps are more accurate than wrist-based optic sensors on watches. Many can be used independently or linked to a watch or smartphone.



Wahoo Tickr
★★★★★
£39.99 Superb training tool with great connectivity and all for under £40.
Issue 435
uk.wahoofitness.com



Coros Heart Rate Monitor
★★★★★
£69 Straps to your arm for proven accuracy but arguably could offer more features.
Issue 435
uk.coros.com



Wahoo Trackr
★★★★★
£79.99 Accurate and comfy chest strap that can be recharged, but that does mean another cable.
Issue 435
uk.wahoofitness.com



Polar H10
★★★★★
£86.50 Excellent accuracy and extremely quick to connect. Comfortable, too.
Issue 435
polar.com



Garmin Pro Plus
★★★★★
£119.99 Impressive chest strap that'll appeal to existing Garmin users for multisport action.
Issue 410
garmin.com

MULTISPORT WATCHES

Tech evolution's seen computers shrink to watch size. As such, you can expect GPS, heart rate, sleep measurements and a whole lot more, starting from about £200.



Coros Pace 3
★★★★★
£219 Swift GPS, huge battery life and a wonderful price. A fine effort from Coros.
Issue 422
uk.coros.com



Garmin Forerunner 265
★★★★★
£429.99 Great AMOLED screen displays a wealth of useful training and racing information.
Issue 422
garmin.com



Suunto Race
★★★★★
£479 Fantastic multisport watch that comes in at a very good price point.
Issue 425
suunto.com



Apple Watch Ultra 2
★★★★★
£799 Apple's sport offerings continue to improve. But it'll strike your bank account.
Issue 424
apple.com



Garmin Fenix 8
★★★★★
£949.99 Yes, that's a mortgage-threatening price but this watch packs everything and more.
Issue 435
garmin.com

TRI-SUITS

Tri-suits are vital as you can wear them from gun to finish. They should shed water nicely after exiting T1, contain a comfy chamois for the bike and be flexible come the run. Pockets are also useful.



Zone3 Activate+
★★★★★
£115 Great breathability, seam construction and internal lining cranks up this suit's comfort.
Issue 430
zone3.com



Raceskin Aero
★★★★★
£130 An impressive mix of technology and comfort at a very impressive price point.
Issue 430
raceskin.co.uk



NoPinz Pro-1Evo
★★★★★
£184.99 A well-priced, comfy and aero suit in multiple sizing options. A fine, fine suit.
Issue 431
nopinz.com



Zoot Ultra Triathlon P1
★★★★★
£292 A superb suit that really excels in the heat and humidity. Might need bigger pad for Ironman.
Issue 431
zootsports.co.uk



Castelli PR2 Speedsuit
★★★★★
£360 A highly technical, speedy and supple suit... if you can afford the high price tag.
Issue 431
castelli-cycling.com

ENERGY GELS

These sachets of energy are useful for all disciplines, but especially the run as they're easily stowed. Many contain a mix of glucose and fructose to deliver more energy.



High5 Electrolyte Energy Gel
★★★★★
£1.45 A great-value energy gel that delivers with no airs or graces.
Issue 422
highfive.co.uk



SiS Go Isotonic Gel
★★★★★
£1.67 The original isotonic gel and one that stands the test of time. Berry flavour is our pick.
Issue 422
sciencehsport.com



Torq Cola Caffeine Gel
★★★★★
£2.15 The caffeine version delivers a performance boost without sacrificing taste.
Issue 422
torqfitness.com



Precision Fuel Original Gel
★★★★★
£2.25 Great consistency, appreciated neutral taste and packs away neatly.
Issue 422
precisionhydration.com



Maurten Gel 100 Caffeine
★★★★★
£3.21 Hydrogel formulation settles smoothly, albeit this is one costly energy hit.
Issue 422
maurten.com

SUNGLASSES

Arguably, these should be termed 'performance eyewear' as they should be worn year-round to protect from dirt flicking up from your mate's rear wheel. Wraparound models are common for great and clear peripheral vision.



Tifosi Vogel SL
★★★★★
£54.99 Great price for comfortable sunglasses that boost contrasts well and stay in place.
Issue 432
tifosi-optics.co.uk



Sungod Airas
★★★★★
£140 Impressive sunglasses with class-leading field of view, but not infallible in direct light.
Issue 432
sungod.co



Smith Motive
★★★★★
£160 If they fit you well, these are exceptional sunglasses that excel on the bike and run.
Issue 432
smithoptics.com



Koo Alibi
★★★★★
£169.99 Stylish, secure and great field of vision, but no case and others better in super bright light.
Issue 432
koo-world.co



Roka GP-1X
★★★★★
£230 Add an extra lens for low light and these would be best on test, but they don't come cheap.
Issue 432
uk.roka.com

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Phizz 3-in-1 Formula
★★★★★
£7.99 for 20 Not sport-specific but still 317mg sodium, plus other vitamins and minerals.
Issue 421
phizz.co



SiS Hydro
★★★★★
£8 for 20 Palatable offering that delivers a range of electrolytes including 345mg sodium.
Issue 421
sciencehsport.com



Precision Hydration 1000
★★★★★
£8.99 for 10 1,000mg sodium will suit many, but 500mg and 1,500mg options available.
Issue 421
precisionhydration.com



Scratch Labs Hydration
★★★★★
£27.95 for 20 Sodium content comes in at 380mg. Tastes good, but not cheap.
Issue 421
silverfish-uk.com



Styrkr SLT05 Caffeine+
★★★★★
£9.99 for six Solid product with 360mg sodium, but minimal caffeine content.
Issue 421
styrkr.com

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GETTY

P70 **HOW TO SWIM OUTDOORS ALL WINTER**



HELEN WEBSTER

220's Editor is also a Level 2 open-water swimming coach and RLSS open-water lifeguard trainer/assessor.

P75 **SIMPLE RECIPES RICH IN GUT- FRIENDLY FIBRE**



KATE PERCY

is a food for fitness expert and amateur athlete. She's written three books on sports nutrition and founded Go Bites.

P78 **ASK THE TRIATHLON COACH**



BEN BRIGHT

is a former triathlon Olympian (Sydney 2000) and head coach of British Triathlon's Olympic Programme.

P79 **YOUR TRAINING QUESTIONS**



ANDREW SHEAFF, JAMES WITTS, PHILIP HATZIZ & HELEN WEBSTER

Our experts answer Qs on using a kick board, adapting protein shakes, hill running and swim skills.



HOW TO SWIM OUTDOORS ALL WINTER

FROSTY MORNINGS AND BALTIC WATER CAN MAKE FOR MAGICAL (AND BENEFICIAL!) OPEN-WATER SWIMS. HERE'S HOW TO DO THEM AND STAY SAFE

WORDS HELEN WEBSTER IMAGES GETTY IMAGES (LEAD) REMY WHITING (PRODUCTS)

Given this is our issue on sale in December, you might be questioning why we're talking about swimming outdoors. After all – there's nice warm swimming pools for all that once race season is over. Right?

I have to admit, when it comes to quality training sessions I would absolutely agree with you. For focussing on technique or for distance sessions, the pool is the place to go once water temperatures start dropping in the winter months. After all, it's near impossible for most of us to think about tweaking our stroke when our whole body just wants to curl up against the cold. Plus, unless you have truly exceptional acclimatisation built up over years of cold water swimming, you aren't going to be in there for very long.

There are benefits to swimming outdoors all year round though. Perhaps the main one for triathletes is that it will make things much easier when spring rolls back round and outdoor training starts again. Dipping all winter will mean you are more acclimatised and more able to cope with the early season temperatures (plus your club mates will be complaining about it being freezing, while to you it will feel warmer!).

Don't discount the other benefits, too, which we can roughly break down into the physical and the mental. Many open-water swimmers report a boost to their feeling of health and wellbeing (nothing makes you feel alive like cold water).

For more on this I recommend the book *Chill* by Dr Mark Harper MD PhD, an expert anaesthetist and researcher who through his medical research explains how cold water immersion can help conditions including chronic pain, arthritis, anxiety, depression, PTSD and migraines.

Plus, in a season where days are short and time indoors long, being out immersed in nature with friends gives an important boost to our mental health. Please do check with your GP if you have any health concerns before entering colder water, but otherwise if you're all ready to go, then let's turn the page and dip in... ►



MEET THE WRITER HELEN WEBSTER

As well as being 220's Editor, Helen is also a qualified Level 2 Open-Water Swim Coach focusing on confidence and runs regular workshops at the South West Maritime Academy near Bristol. She is also an RLSS UK Open Water Lifeguard trainer/assessor.

GETTY IMAGES

10 WAYS TO SWIM SAFELY IN THE COLD WATER

Cold water comes with benefits, but with risks. Here's how to look after yourself...

01 Buddy up
The first rule of open water swimming (and especially cold water swimming?) never go it alone. Even the best of us can get things wrong and having someone else with you reduces the risks of accidents and means that if the worst does happen, you can get help. Having a buddy also means you have someone to check in with – constant assessment of your own response to the water and of your friend's can help prevent problems like hypothermia before they even begin. Plus, you have someone to help you with kit (for example neoprene gloves are a pain to get off yourself when you're cold) and to drink hot choc with afterwards.

02 Make a plan
I would always recommend a managed venue for cold water swimming. Having access to lifeguarded water, shelter and first aid equipment can be invaluable. However if you are planning to swim somewhere more 'wild' – or in the sea during winter when less beaches are lifeguarded – then take precautions and plan ahead. Always know and understand the conditions where you will swim including tide times and swell/currents as well as any hazards. Make sure you use a tow float for visibility and be sure there is mobile phone signal and you have a way of calling for help.

03 Check the weather
The weather can make a big difference to your swim in winter, so check weather reports carefully before you head out. I like the 'Windy' app for a really thorough look at weather as well as sea conditions. If you're worried about lightning, then lightning.org gives you access to real time maps of strikes. More generally, just think about any weather that might make swimming more challenging or dangerous (wind, rain, fog) and/or could make you colder while you swim and afterwards. Having warm, dry kit is crucial for after your swim, so ensure it is covered.

04 Understand water temperatures
How well you

► Always buddy up in open water and use a tow float for extra visibility.

▼ Yes you'll look daft, but a neoprene balaclava will keep you much warmer overall!



tolerate colder water can be based on many factors including experience, acclimatisation, general health and physiology – plus what kit you are wearing. As a guide, in the UK the RLSS consider water under 15°C cold, under 10°C very cold and under 5°C is referred to as 'ice swimming' (or absolutely blimmin' brutal, depending on how you feel about being that cold!). It's a good idea to keep swims short in colder waters. Think 'dip' not 'swim' and keep a log of your time in water at different temperatures to build up a picture of your acclimatisation.

05 Layer up
There's no right or wrong with winter swimming kit, but as a guide I usually advise swimmers to think about two factors when choosing their gear: core temperature and thermal comfort. Core temperature refers (as it sounds) to how warm our core stays as we swim. In colder water our body sends more blood to the core and to the head to protect the most important organs. So wearing a wetsuit will help keep your core warmer for longer.

Winter 'thermal' wetsuits and neoprene vests will all help too. When it comes to your head, we lose a lot of heat through our head as the body will keep sending warmth there to protect your brain. So if you can reduce that heat loss you'll stay warmer



overall. A neoprene cap is a must for me in winter, or you could consider a neoprene balaclava to cover the sensitive neck area too.

06 Cover your hands and feet

When it comes to hands and feet, it's more about 'thermal comfort' as covering them up won't make a big difference to core temperature – the body already directs blood away from the extremities anyway. As fingers and toes have a large surface area to mass though, they really feel the cold – compounded if you're unlucky enough to suffer from Reynaud's Syndrome. Putting a set of neoprene gloves and boots on will make a huge difference though. Just make sure they fit snugly, otherwise they'll balloon as they fill with cold water!

07 Don't jump in...

Cold water shock is one of the main reasons people get into trouble when swimming in open water. Put simply, when you suddenly enter cold water your blood pressure and heart rate will increase and your lungs will take a huge gulp of air (or water, if you're submerged) and as the name suggests, you can go into shock and lose the ability to think clearly and care for yourself. The way to avoid it is fairly simple though – enter the water gradually yet purposefully, allowing each

section of your body (legs, then torso, then shoulders and finally head) to acclimatise a little before you move on. Use your breathing to calm yourself and only start to swim once your breathing is controlled.

08 Keep it short Cold water swimming is one of the few places in sport we'll ask you to leave your ego at the door (or in the changing rooms, at least!). It's been suggested that many of the physical benefits of entering cold water are achieved within the first couple of minutes and that there isn't any need to do to long, punishing cold swims – unless you really enjoy them or are training for an ice swimming challenge.

"The good news is, quite a lot of the beneficial effects of cold water immersion are obtained in the first two minutes," says Mike Tipton, Professor of Human and Applied Physiology at Portsmouth University. "There isn't a need to stay in the water for a long time. "If you want to do long distance, just wear a wetsuit so you don't get too cold. Whether with or without a wetsuit, I think you probably get the same benefits in terms of those initial responses as a wetsuit still allows water in, so your body is still exposed to it."

Also remember every day is different. If you are feeling run down, haven't slept or are inadequately fed and hydrated you may be more sensitive to cold, in



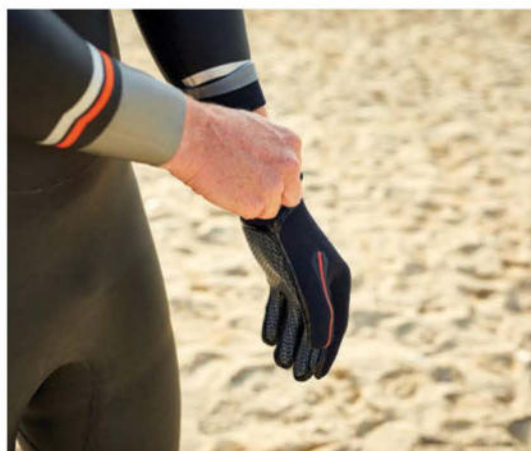
▲ Our feet really feel the cold in winter, so adding a set of neoprene booties will be much more comfortable.

which case listen to your body and don't be afraid to cut a swim short if it need be.

09 Warm up safely

Swim or dip done and your work's not over. A phenomenon known as the after-drop means that after leaving the water your core temperature will continue to drop as the cold continues to move through your body (Mike Tipton from Portsmouth University demonstrates this superbly with a melon and some cold water in an online video if you want to know more!). This in mind, it's important not only to make sure you don't stay in too long but also to have a good rewarming routine. Have warm layers, a changing robe (see p54 for this month's group test) or big coat, a bobble hat and even a hot water bottle and Thermos ready to go. One word of caution: avoid having a hot bath or shower if you are very cold, as it can exacerbate the after-drop and make you very unwell/dizzy.

▼ Cold water on your hands can feel brutal, so add a set of well-fitting neoprene gloves.



10 Be consistent

Nailed your short winter swim routine? Then keep it consistent if you want to reap the benefits come open-water swimming season next Summer. Little and often is the key here, rather than swimming several times one week and then not bothering again for a few weeks! Then you can look forward to March/April when the temperatures start to creep up again and things get gradually easier... **220**

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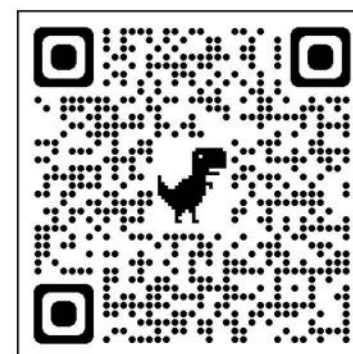


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NUTRITION

FIBRE-RICH RECIPES

Keep your energy stores topped up, your digestive system happy and reduce bloating with these four, fuller-for-longer recipes

IMAGES THE SECRET STUDIO

Fibre is a type of complex carbohydrate that's found in plant-based foods such as peas, beans and lentils, fruit, dried fruit, veg and grains as well as nuts and seeds. As a triathlete, eating the 30g recommended daily dose of fibre will not only keep your digestive system super happy, it will help you feel

fuller for longer (always a good thing for the constantly hungry triathlete) and prevent you feeling bloated, heavy and lethargic.

First up, this quick and easy Greek-style beans on seeded sourdough toast elevates that good old staple to new, giddy heights. Made with big, fat butter beans, this dish provides around half your recommended daily intake of fibre, as well as protein, ►

sustaining carbohydrate, B vitamins and minerals. It's all about the toast, though! Choose a good quality sourdough from your local bakers.

Next up, these lightly-spiced Thai stuffed sweet potatoes are fibre heaven. I like to make them in advance, refrigerate, then heat them up for a post-training treat. An excellent source of vitamin A (beta-carotene), vitamin C, manganese, copper, potassium and iron, sweet potatoes are surprisingly nutritious. Stuffed with this garlicky-chilly-coconut sauce you'll get a great anti-inflammatory effect too.

Eating fibre-rich beans and pulses will help promote the growth of beneficial bacteria in the gut. Try them in this Moroccan chicken harira, a winter-warming stew, or thick soup. It's packed with slow-releasing carbs, excellent quality protein and a rich balance of vitamins and minerals to keep your immune system strong. Prepare in advance for the week ahead; it tends to taste even better the next day, once the flavours have had time to infuse.

Luckily for us, fibre's not all about lentils and the like. It comes in all sorts of guises, including puddings! This delicious Apple, apricot & date crumble is packed with fibre. The crunchy crumble topping includes a combo of ground almonds, while the sweet, fibre-rich dates in the crumble mean you don't need to add sugar to the fruit. Plus, you can count a portion of this as two of your five-a-day!



Sports nutrition cook and keen amateur athlete Kate Percy set up the #GoFaster campaign in 2009 and, following the publication of several sports nutrition books, now produces a range of all-natural energy balls, Go Bites (katepercys.com).



MOROCCAN HARIRA & CHICKEN STEW

PREP 10mins COOK 40mins SERVES 4

INGREDIENTS • 3 tbsps olive oil • 4 boneless, skinless chicken thighs, diced • 1 red onion, peeled, sliced finely • 3 cloves garlic, peeled, crushed • 2 sticks celery, chopped • 3 carrots, chopped • 2 tpsps each cumin seeds, ground cumin & ground coriander • 1 tsp each ground cinnamon, ground turmeric & smoked paprika • 2 tbsp harissa • 2 x 400g tins chopped tomatoes • 1 x 400g tin chickpeas, drained • 100g raw puy lentils, washed • Juice of half a lemon • 1 tsp sugar • 1 chicken stock cube To serve 25g bunch fresh coriander, chopped • Natural yoghurt

METHOD

1 Heat 1 tbsp olive oil in a heavy, flameproof casserole dish. On a high

heat, quickly brown the chicken. Set aside. Reduce the heat, add another tbsp oil and gently fry the onion, garlic, celery and carrots until soft. Stir in the spices and cook for 1min.

2 Return the chicken to the pan, add the harissa, tomatoes, chickpeas and lentils, then pour in 500ml water. Do NOT add salt, or the lentils won't go soft. Bring to the boil and simmer, covered, for about 30mins.

3 Add the sugar and lemon juice, crumble in the stock cube and season well. Cook for 2mins, serve.





GREEK BEANS ON TOAST

PREP 5mins COOK TIME 25mins SERVES 2

INGREDIENTS • 1 small onion, finely chopped • 2 cloves garlic, crushed • 1 small stick celery, finely chopped • 1tsp coriander seeds, crushed • ½ tsp paprika • Pinch ground cinnamon • 1tbsp tomato purée • 400g tin chopped tomatoes • 400g tin butter beans, drained • ½ tsp sugar • Sprig of fresh thyme or 1tsp dried oregano • 2 tsbbs chopped curly-leaf parsley • 3 tsbbs extra virgin olive oil To serve 2 thick slices seeded sourdough • 1 clove garlic, peeled • Olive oil

METHOD

1 Heat 2 tsbbs of oil in a saucepan, gently fry the onion, garlic, celery, paprika, cinnamon and coriander seeds for 5mins. Stir in the purée, cook for 1min. Add the tomatoes, beans, herbs and sugar, bring to the boil. Reduce the heat, cover and simmer for 15mins. Remove the cover and cook for another 5mins, until the sauce thickens. Season well.

2 Brush each slice of bread with oil and garlic, and toast under the grill until golden. Stir in the parsley and another tbsp oil, pour over the toast and serve.



APPLE, APRICOT & DATE CRUMBLE

PREP 10mins COOK 35-40mins SERVES 4

INGREDIENTS • 3 large Bramley apples, peeled, cored and cut into chunks • 8 dried apricots, halved • 8 dates, halved • 100ml apple juice • 100g cold, unsalted butter, cut into small cubes • 100g wholemeal spelt flour (I use Sharphams) • 50g ground almonds • 50g oats • 2 tsbbs demerara sugar • 1 tsp ground cinnamon • Handful chopped walnuts

METHOD

1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/gas mark 5. Rub together the butter, almonds, flour and oats until the mixture looks and feels like breadcrumbs. Stir in the sugar and cinnamon.

2 Arrange the apples, apricots and dates in a baking dish. Add the apple juice. Spoon the crumble mixture over the top, scatter with the walnuts and bake for 35-40mins. **220**

THAI SWEET POTATOES

PREP 2mins COOK 50mins SERVES 2

INGREDIENTS 2 large sweet potatoes • 1 tsp olive oil • 1 tsp sea salt • 2-3 tsps Thai red curry paste • ½ can coconut milk • Juice of half a lime • Handful of frozen peas • 1 red chilli, deseeded and sliced • 2 tsps Thai fish sauce • 25g bunch fresh coriander, chopped • 20g cashews, chopped • 1tbsp desiccated coconut

METHOD

1 Preheat oven to 200°C. Rub potatoes with oil and salt. Prick with a fork and bake in oven for about 50mins.

2 Combine the curry paste with the coconut milk in a saucepan and bring to the boil. Lower the heat, add the peas and chilli and cook for a couple of minutes, until the peas have defrosted. Add the fish sauce, lime and coriander.

3 Once cooked and cooled, cut each potato in half lengthways. Carefully scoop out the flesh, leaving a little on the skins to keep their shape. Chop the flesh into cubes and gently stir into the sauce.

4 Spoon the sauce back into the skins. Sprinkle with the coconut and cashews. Return to oven for about 5mins. Tuck in!



HOW TO STAY HEALTHY ALL WINTER

Unfortunately the winter months not only bring shorter days and colder weather but also the increased risk of illness. Here are a few tips to help you navigate this tricky time and build a good base of fitness for the summer season.



**COACH
BEN BRIGHT**

As the former head coach of British Triathlon's Olympic Programme, Ben Bright oversaw our most successful Games to date. He's also a former triathlon Olympian (Sydney 2000) and is now the national coaching consultant for British Triathlon.

Come the off-season and most of us will feel that dreaded tickle in the throat which means only one thing is coming along with it – cold and flu season. Rather than see winter illness as inevitable though, there are things which you can do to strengthen your immune system and protect your health...

Get more sleep

Sleep is the holy grail of recovery. There is nothing that tops a good night of sleep when it comes to giving your body the best chance of recovering and adapting to training. But this is also true when it comes to being in a strong position to fight off any bugs you may encounter. Try to get a good amount of sleep each night and particularly try to avoid multiple nights of minimal/poor sleep back-to-back accompanied by hard training.

Fuel your body

There is more and more acceptance that the impact of the amount of and timing of nutrition around training has been underestimated. Scientists are now saying we should be fueling even our easy/recovery sessions. Being organized prior to training to ensure you have fueled well before, during and after can be a faff, but the difference this makes is significant, both in your adaptation to training as well as your ability to recover well and avoid illness. Imagine you head to the track after a long day at work, having had nothing to eat since lunch. You do a hard session with just water, then head home, shower and get something to eat about an hour after the end of your run. This puts a huge stress on your immune system, meaning you will be far more susceptible to picking up a bug.

Avoid the crowds

Many of the triathletes attending the race briefings at the Olympics wore masks and this is similar when flying. If you know you will be in a small space with a lot of people for an extended period of time it's worth considering a mask, or if you can't do this, pick a spot in the room where there is good airflow. One of the learnings from Covid was how airborne illness spreads and fresh air is one of the best ways to mitigate against this. Drinking plenty of water and throat lozenges also help – keeping your throat moist so that bugs can't settle and take hold.

Focus on diet

It can be easy to slip into 'comfort food'

mode when it's cold and dark outside.

Nothing wrong with that, just make sure you are getting plenty of color in your diet. A good, balanced diet supports your immune system so you are better able

to fight things off. Think of your diet as different to fueling.

Fueling should be simple energy your body can quickly absorb to help performance and recovery. Diet is there to service multiple different requirements, including supporting your immune system, so

it's not surprising that your

diet should be varied. Supplements, such as vitamin D, can also be important during winter when you're not getting as much sun as you normally would. Try to get outside too, though! **220**

A good, balanced diet supports your immune system to you are better able to fight things off

Need advice from Ben? Send an email to askben@22otriathlon.com



GETTY IMAGES

“I’d like to suggest you use your kickboard to improve your fundamental skills”



GETTY IMAGES

Q: ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS TO SWIM DRILLS WITH A KICK BOARD? *Terry white*

A Kickboards are a staple of any swimming programme, almost a mandatory piece of equipment. Just about every aquatic facility has kickboards available for use, and just about every aquatic athlete spends at least some time kicking on a kickboard. While there is a lot of value in doing so, why do we have to limit the use of a kickboard for completing kick sets?

I’d like to suggest you use your kickboard to actually improve your swimming technique. Rather than just develop the fitness of your legs, let’s use the board to improve your fundamental skills. To get started, what’s one reason kickboards are so popular? Because they float! Let’s use that to our advantage.

I addressed the importance of floating exercises to improve your technique before. It’s a critical

aspect of improving your comfort in the water, which sets the foundation for improving your freestyle swimming technique. However, some individuals need a little extra push to really understand how to float and how to use their natural flotation to enhance their technique. As the kickboard floats, we’re going to use this flotation to improve your skills.

Start with floating on the board

You’ve probably seen young children who are taking swim lessons, and instead spend their all of their focus on trying to float on their kickboard. Well, we’re going to do the same!

Place the board under your chest, aiming to keep the bottom of the kick board above your hip bones. Now, lean into the board, lean into the water, and float. You’re going to have press your chest and face down into the water to keep the board in place, exactly the skill you’ll need to perform when aiming to move through the water with the hips up at the surface. If you can successfully accomplish this skill, try to shift the board closer to

your head, further away from your hips. Alternatively, you can add another board or one with more buoyancy to increase the challenge!

Next, get kicking

Once you’ve gotten the hang of floating, it’s time to get moving. Start by finding some stability while floating, then start kicking. It’s more challenging to maintain your balance and stability once you get moving. If you can do so, you’re well on your way to achieving great position in the water, without using your legs to achieve that position.

Feel free to use fins during this exercise, particularly if you’re not a strong kicker. It will help you keep moving. At the same time, keep the kick light so that you can focus on your position, ensuring that you’re achieving that position by leaning into the kickboard rather than just kicking harder. Once you’ve spent some time kicking on the board, try swimming regular freestyle, aiming to feel the same support of the board, this time coming from the natural source of flotation in your chest – your lungs!



ANDREW SHEAFF

US swim coach Andrew Sheaff has been helping people of all ages improve their swimming for over 20 years. He specialises in coaching triathletes to help improve their swimming skills through online coaching.

Q: HOW CAN I MAKE PROTEIN SHAKES TASTE BETTER?

Carrie Weston



JAMES WITTS

Former 220 Triathlon magazine editor James is a cycling and sports writer, editor and author, and has written three books, including *The Science of the Tour de France*.

A Protein shakes are a staple of many a triathlete's fuelling regime to stimulate rapid muscle repair, rebuild and fire up growth. They're great if your busy schedule means you won't enjoy a hearty, healthy and energising meal soon after your workout. The problem is, as you suggest, while we'd argue the taste of protein shakes has improved over the years, many shakes verge on the unpalatable.

Why is arguably down to the protein concentrates and isolates that stimulate this muscle repair. They've been stripped of everything but the protein, resulting in that chalky aftertaste that is all too familiar. In turn, to hide the chalkiness, some

manufacturers add a rather unpleasant mix of thickeners, artificial flavours, and sugar substitutes like sucralose and stevia to their formulations. Often, this can make them worse. But there are things that can be done to rectify the culinary situation.

Firstly, it's an obvious one but try a different product. As we mentioned, not all protein shakes are equal. But if that doesn't do the job it's time for one of these:

1 Protein shakes taste nicer mixed with milk rather than water. Play around with dairy, oat, almond... whatever you fancy. Just note that the fat and lactose content of milk slows down the absorption of protein, albeit this shouldn't really be an issue.

2 Feel free to play around with natural sweeteners. These include maple syrup, coconut sugar and honey. You can also crank up flavour by adding extracts like vanilla, mint and almond. Cocoa powder's also a popular choice.

3 Talking flavour, don't fear the fire; in other words, play around with your spice rack. A sprinkle of nutmeg or cinnamon will enliven the palate. Cayenne pepper's a perfect partner for a chocolate protein shake, especially if you're just back from a frozen winter run. And you can't go wrong with a wee swig of coffee syrup.

4 Blending your protein shake with a handful of fruit's also a tasty winner. Berries are always a winner, not only for their juicy succulence but also their antioxidants, which'll help sweep up free radicals post-workout. Fresh or frozen are fine, though frozen obviously adds a cooling edge if that's what you're after.

5 If you've tried an array of protein shakes and flavours and your choice is still not fit for consumption, choose an unflavoured option and play around with some of the ideas above. If you start with a blank canvas, the sky's your limit!



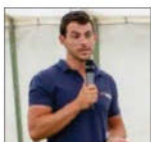
“Adjust the session intensity with these three variables: gradient, distance and duration”



GETTY IMAGES

Q: SHOULD I ADD HILL SPRINTS TO MY RUN TRAINING?

Kit Berman



PHILIP HATZIS

Philip Hatzis is a BTF Level 3 qualified coach and Ironman certified coach. He's the founder and head coach of Tri Training Harder and has taken many of his athletes to World and Euro Championships.

A This answer requires a lot of context. Firstly, there is a difference between hill repeats and hill sprints. Grouping them as 'hill work' helps answer the question generally. There are three specific benefits of hill work:

1. **Resistance Training.** Includes resistance (strength) training, using gravity to add load, making you stronger.
2. **Form Improvement.** Hill repeats are used to improve form through postural work and strength endurance. Ensure you keep your posture upright through each rep!
3. **Injury Reduction.** The impact load of running uphill is lower

than that of flat running, although there is an increased mechanical (muscular) load.

The hidden benefit of the downhill section is that you can work on good cadence and foot strike, ensuring you land underneath your centre of mass. For runners looking at racing trails, downhill work can be just as important.

Hill repeats have three variables to adjust the session focus: the gradient, the distance/duration, and the intensity. Runners can use these variables to tweak a session to optimise the benefits or focus. The duration of the hill repeat links directly to the desired physiological stimulus. For example, shorter <20s ones are looking at that high intensity work whereas longer ones would be looking at lower intensities.

Most people looking to add hill repeats to their training try to find the steepest hill possible. However, this is not always beneficial, especially for running longer distances. The steeper they

are, the more muscular they become, focussing more on strength or strength endurance.

Shallower gradients lend themselves more to holding form, or longer intervals. Often a general approach is the shallower the gradient, the longer the race. However, the steep work is still necessary, especially for those racing ultras and long distances.

Naturally, with any high-intensity work, there is a risk of injury. Don't underestimate how much even one hill repeat will have on you. However, given that a big benefit of hill work is strength, hills can reduce the chance of injury too; starting gradually on hills can benefit your running robustness. Downhills are where there is more impact. If needs be walk the downhill!

Should you do hill sprints? Yes, that higher intensity on any gradient can be really helpful for physiological changes as well as muscular strength adaptations. Expand your hill repeat horizon and see some real running gains.



REMY WHITING

“Grab two lanes in a quiet session and practise swim starts, racing a friend to the end of the lane”

Q: CAN I PRACTISE OPEN-WATER SKILLS IN THE POOL?

Henry Clarkson



HELEN WEBSTER

Helen has been 220's editor since July 2013, when she made the switch from marathons to multisport. Helen is a qualified Level 2 Open-Water Swim Coach focusing on open-water confidence and runs regular workshops at the South West Maritime Academy near Bristol. She is also an RLSS UK Open Water Lifeguard trainer/assessor.

A Absolutely! Many triathletes head back to the pool during the colder months, but that's no reason to forget about the skills you'll need come the 2025 race season. The good news is, adding a few lengths on each of these skills each time you head to the pool will really pay off. Here's a few things to focus on:

Practise sighting

Arguably the most important skill for open water, as well as the easiest to neglect when you have a black line to follow. Get used to doing some 25m or 50m repeats practising different sighting techniques (for example just before, or just after a breath) while aiming to keep your head as low as possible. Think 'crocodile eyes' and try to focus on the end of the pool rather than lifting too high. I really like the 'head coach'

function on the Form Smart Swim goggles for help with head position, too, if you have a pair.

Swimming straight

This one could make you unpopular in a busy session so choose your moment... But swimming in a straight line is invaluable in open water. In a quiet pool swim with your eyes closed for a few strokes and see how far off course you go. Do you veer to the right or left when you're not looking at the black line? Use what you learn to tweak your stroke – check in on whether you are crossing your hands over the centre line, which could cause you to snake or swim in circles.

Emulate body position

Most pools won't let you train in a wetsuit (you'd overheat) but you can create a similar body position by using a pull buoy or buoyancy shorts. These lift your hips, allowing you to rest your legs and work on the front of the stroke – a similar feeling to wearing a wetsuit. Also, use the off-season to work on getting those hips up naturally so you don't have to rely on a very buoyant wetsuit – see

Andrew Sheaff's tips on the previous page!

Try out race starts

Most triathlons won't see you doing dive starts (phew!) so leave the blocks alone... But a good thing to practise is deep water starts. To do these, head to the deep end and tread water. Scull with your body weight tipped forward, so you are in a more horizontal position, ready to swim. Perform a wide-armed scull to give yourself space and count down to a race 'start', aiming to get into your freestyle stroke as fast as possible... If you can, grab two lanes and race a friend!

Play with drafting

You'll need at least one other swimmer for this. Ideally use the width of a full lane and practise different drafting formations – on the feet and on the hip – with one, two or three other swimmers. Drafting can be as simple as one swimmer trying to get on the feet of a slightly faster swimmer, or four swimmers forming a 'diamond' formation so three people get a little free speed. Play and see what works for you. **PRO**

220 TRIATHLON

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NEXT MONTH

On sale – 27 December

BEST RACES FOR 2025

If you're calendar has some spaces, fill 'em up with
our pick of the biggest, boldest, brightest (and
gnarliest) events in next year's tri calendar

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

Looking for some new year inspiration?
Our whistle-stop tour of the highlights
of 2024 should do the trick

VEGGIE TRAINING

Doing Veganuary? Find expert advice for athletes,
plus simple recipes to support recovery

GEAR ON TEST

'Tis the season to try out trail shoes, winter
swimming kit and toasty run tights...

HOW
WAS IT
FOR YOU?



HOW
WAS IT
FOR YOU?

BACK IN THE GAME

With new organisers and a capacity field, the Bala Triathlon was back in 2024 hoping to rekindle past glories. Also aiming for redemption was 220's Matt Baird aboard his Brompton. Here's how it unfolded... ►

WORDS MATT BAIRD IMAGE GERWYN ROBERTS

My race bike isn't allowed on the bus. I'm going to have to race on my Brompton...



MATT BAIRD

Bristol-based Matt was on the 220 staff for 13 years. He has raced everything from super-sprint to off-road duathlons and Iron-distance races around the world, often very slowly and often involving eating a sandwich in T1.

Champagne Supernova' by Oasis blasts over the Bala Triathlon transition's loudspeaker, the Britpop band having enticed half the nation the previous day into staring at a spinning wheel of doom on Ticketmaster's website. This is probably the closest most of us will get to hearing Oasis in an outdoor setting this decade, and far cheaper too. Like those mono-browed chart botherers, the Bala Tri was also born in the 1990s and has been a regular presence on the UK tri circuit alongside the likes of the Vitruvian and Windsor Triathlon ever since.

Times have been tough recently for the race, however, with 2020's cancelled even before Covid did its thing and 2023 seeing the dawn fog curtailing the swim leg. With the 2023 organiser Tough Runner UK no longer tough nor running, Welsh event supremos Always Aim High of Slate/Sand/Snowman fame have stepped in to save the race from being consigned to the history books.

I've signed up late to Bala in a bid to rescue my racing season. Due to both a torn knee ligament and subsequent lethargy, my 2024 has been limited to a DNF on the run leg at Challenge Wales and being swept up by the broomwagon at a recent GFNY gran fondo in Sweden.

In my enthusiasm, I've forgotten that my partner needs the car to take my son to triathlon club on the Saturday before Bala, so embark on a 300km

The 15°C water proved a bit too bracing for 220's Matt, who was glad he only had 750m to do.



adventure to get to Bala from Bristol via a Cross Country train and the T3 bus from Ruabon to Bala in south-eastern Eryri/Snowdonia. The upshot, apart from the environmental benefits, is that I have six hours of quiet time each way to sip a chardonnay and read the collected works of Shakespeare (okay, a lukewarm Kronenbourg and the Beano) before the majestic mountains of Wales' biggest National Park arrive. The downside is my road bike isn't allowed on the T3 bus. I'm going to have to race on my folding Brompton bike.

MORNING GLORY

The town of Bala is pretty much booked-up for hotels, so I step back into my twenties and find a bed in a shared dorm room at the local backpackers, where I meet a lovely chap named Tyler who has entered the Olympic-distance option on a whim the week before. It's Tyler's first triathlon to boot, and he already has an Ironman booked in. I admire his enthusiasm and bravery, although I like him less when I later discover that he's recorded a 2:46hr finish on his multisport debut to break my own Olympic-distance PB at the first attempt. A quick Instagram scan to say congrats after the race reveals that I've been sharing my dorm room with Hollyoaks' current bad boy Abe Fielding!



▲ Under new organisers, everyone was glad to see the race back again.

▼ Bala is the biggest lake in Wales and dominated the race scenery through bike and run too.

The 9:30am start time of the sprint-distance race is positively luxurious, although my far-too-handsome new friend and I are woken at 4am, 4:10am and 4:20am by the phone of someone in our dorm room and their belated snoozing of the alarm. They leave just before their phone is tossed out the window, but I fail to sleep again, ill-founded concerns about the safety of my beloved Brompton in the hostel's storage cupboard spinning in my sleep-addled brain.

I arrive at the race HQ on the shores of Llyn Tegid early and promptly downgrade my Olympic-distance entry for the sprint at registration, with half an eye on



my tender knee ligament, another on catching the 11:35am bus from Bala back to Ruabon. This gives me two hours to race, clear transition of my soggy wares and find a pasty outlet before the T3 bus rolls in.

I'm usually introspective ahead of racing, the usual pre-race worries nudging me towards a quiet corner of transition. Happily, the Brompton acts as the ultimate icebreaker and nerve-soother, bringing an array of people wanting to chat, while a regular Always Aim High steward tells me that he's never seen a Brompton at their races before. I love highlighting the virtues of my folding wonder and how I managed to get here from Bristol, while it's fun to hear the tri tales of both the beginners and experienced triathletes alike amid their pre-race kit faffing.

MYTHS & LEGENDS

If 2023 was the year of the fearsome heat on the Bala run course, this year it's the turn of the wince-inducing water on the swim leg, with the glacial Llyn Tegid recorded at 15°C on the morning of the race. While that's positively bath-like for hardened open-water swimmers, I'm just thankful that we're not racing in May. I don my neoprene swim hat under my cap and leave it until the dying pre-race seconds before tiptoeing into the lake on a sole-torturing jagged underwater rock carpet.

The freshwater of Wales' largest natural lake is pancake flat, but the chill means I struggle to regulate my breathing, my heart rate also nudging into the red. My goggles fog up and I struggle to sight the next buoy, so I swim lens-less for much of the 750m, relieved I'm not doing the 1.5km Olympic-distance leg. Llyn Tegid



Matt wheels his trusty Brompton into T2...



...then runs out for a scenic last leg.



is Wales' answer to Loch Ness, with local mythology suggesting that a coiled dragon-like creature exists in its 40-metre depths. A legend so believable that a Japanese film crew spent three days here searching the lake in the nineties. I don't stick around long enough to find out, returning to the shallows after 22mins and 250m more than I should've swum, before producing another Ministry of Silly Walks' entry on the painful minerals below.

Due to originally entering the longer option, I've had to rack my bike with the Olympic-distance athletes and must weave between them racking their gear to exit T1, the bell of my Brompton clearing a path. "What a legend!" a man shouts (it was something finishing in 'end' anyway) when I leave transition for the bike leg. Before I can tell him that I just didn't sort my life admin in time, we're off onto the gently rolling 19km course (boasting just 145m of elevation gain), with the route hugging the western shoreline of Llyn Tegid before heading south to the turn at Pont Rhyd-sarn.

THE FOLD RUSH

What it lacks in aerodynamics, gears and 700c wheels, the Brompton makes up for in extreme comfort, with my back straight and the not dissimilar mechanics to running mimicking the only tri discipline that I'm semi-good at. My speed lingers at 25km/h throughout, the gentle hills navigated with ease and any overtaking causing double takes. The closed-road nature of the course is a joy and we're soon trading places with each other without the fear of motorised transport clipping our wings. I manage to hold my own in this game of wacky races, tinkling my bell at the supporters that line the route before posting a 45min split (78th out of 127 sprint-distance racers) that's in the same ballpark as my regular road bike output.

The 5km run leg follows the same pretty lakeside route as the bike course, with the 854m-high Arenig Fawr mountain looming to the west of us, Aran Fawddwy (906m) to the south. With blisters brewing under my Hokas, I start to regret my decision to go sockless on the bike and run to save a few seconds

▲ Some athletes even raced on normal bikes, unlike our man Matt...



▼ With less elevation than other Welsh tris, this is a great option for all levels.

putting on socks in transition. My knee is just about holding up and I post a solid 24:04min 5km split to savour the reward of a triathlon finishing chute for the first time this season. I collect my slate coaster at the finale, my overall finishing time of 1:38:06 ensuring I've won my race against the T3 bus (if not the 70 sprint-distance athletes who have finished before me). My win is so emphatic, in fact, that the T3 bus doesn't even show up for our 11:35am rendezvous.

After an hour of waiting, I give up and cycle 20km on the busy A494 road to Corwen to try and find an alternative bus, huffing, puffing and cursing TrawsCymru for the no show. I make it to Ruabon with enough time for my regular post-race tradition of sinking a pint of Guinness and watching Spurs snatch defeat from the jaws of victory, before my six-hour Cross Country train back to Bristol gets me home in time for a reheated roast and tonight's *Malcolm and the Middle* double bill with the kids.

THE MASTERPLAN

With Always Aim High now at the helm and the Snowdonian setting, it's hard not to compare Bala to the Slateman's more dramatic cycle route up

Pen-y-Pass and run through the Dinorwig Slate Quarry (the latter surely one of triathlon's best run courses). That Llanberis-based wonder also trumps Bala in the elevation stats, but Bala has to be the pick for both speedsters and beginners alike, and I'd recommend anyone inspired by the Paris 2024 heroics of Alex Yee, Dave Ellis or Megan Richter to enter the race in 2025 (the event date is already set for 7 September). The atmosphere conjured by the athletes and from the crowds lining the route was joyous from start to finish, while the slick yet personable organisation was exactly what I've come to expect from Always Aim High.

Twelve hours of travel for a 98-minute race might seem excessive, but it was worth it to save my tri season and experience an event that's long been in my bucket-list. I'd do it again in a heartbeat.

As for the Brompton, it's coming with me on any non-mountainous triathlons in the future and, with any PBs now seemingly out of reach, I can see a new lease of life and the next chapter of my tri career. Perhaps I'll even attempt an Ironman on it. I'll just need to come up with a snappier title than the Brironman. Alternative suggestions on a postcard, please.... [R20](#)



The atmosphere was joyous from start to finish



RUN TO THE SUN

Celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, there was plenty to celebrate at the annual TUI Palma Marathon Mallorca

There can't be many sights like a true marathon in full flow. Incorporating three distances, the full marathon, a half marathon and a 9K, a whopping 8,000 runners took part in the TUI Palma Marathon Mallorca events day on 20th October 2024.

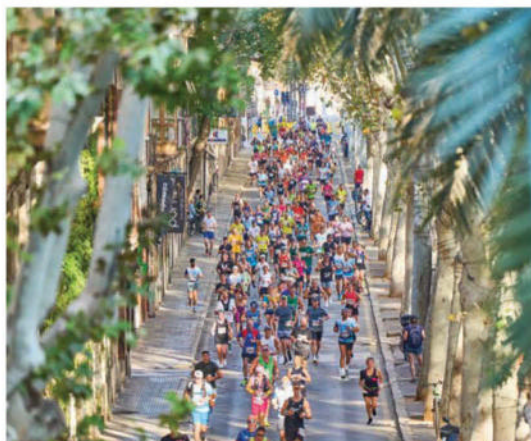
In doing so, the race consolidated its position as the biggest running event in the Balearic Islands, and one of the biggest female participation events in Europe with 44% of the field female this year.

It's a truly Global entry list too with 75 nationalities represented. Annika Uckel (Germany) and the Aziz Boutoiz (Morocco) won the

marathon distance events. Uckel dominated the race from the start, followed by Belgian Hannelore Polleunis, first runner up at the finish line in her debut at the marathon distance, and American Shannon Kelsey Schiltus took third position. Aziz Boutoiz clocked in at 2:28:23 despite the good performance of the Balearic Toni Roca, who held the lead initially but then dropped to second place. Norwegian Thomas Kjetland was third.

RUNNING TO VICTORY

In the half marathon distance, Britain's Jemima Cooper and Italy's Luca Cantoni were the



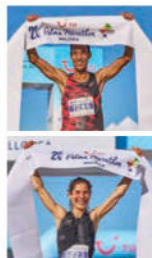
winners. The German international athlete René Menzel, who won the half marathon in 2023, was the fastest in the shortest distance of the day (9 kilometres) with 28:38, and the French athlete Liv Westphal won the 9k in the women's category with 32:37.

The organisers of the TUI Palma Marathon Mallorca have paid tribute to Mari Carmen Soler, a visually impaired runner and triathlete from the Balearic Islands, by awarding her this year's 'Golden Bib'. Soler joins the club of Balearic athletes who have received this award, succeeding Caridad Jerez, Emilio de la Cámara, Miquel Capó and Toni Peña.

CHASING THE SUN

It's no wonder the races attract so many nationalities. As winter starts to close in and race season come to an end in other countries, the TUI Palma Marathon offers the opportunity to set a last PB, or test that summer training out one more time.

For two decades now 'Chasing The Sun' or the now mythical 'Follow The Sun' has been used as the slogan for the race, on an island where one of the greatest attractions is its almost 300 sunny days a year. Respecting its beautiful location, the TUI Palma



▲ Race winners Aziz Boutoiz and Annika Uckel celebrate.

Marathon Mallorca is committed to being a benchmark for its commitment to sustainability, thanks to innovative and pioneering measures such as the making of the 42k Running brand finisher t-shirts with polyester thread fabric from recycled plastic bottles and with the runner's bag and the refreshment bag and medal ribbon also made of recycled and biodegradable material. The race has also eliminated paper documentation and improved the resources available to runners.

Sounds good? Entries are now open for next year's event (see boxout for full details), so if you fancy representing your nation at one of the sunniest end of season races, you could find yourself booking a flight to Palma... **220**

▼ Racing with sun, palm trees and spectator support? Yes please!



With 8,000 runners taking part over three distances, the TUI Palma Marathon is truly epic.

RESULTS

MARATHON MEN

1. Aziz Boutoiz 2:28:23
2. Toni Roca 2:31:05
3. Thomas Kjetland 2:35:39

WOMEN

1. Annika Uckel 2:56:47
2. Hannelore Polleunis 3:01:46
3. Shannon Kelsey Schilthuis 3:08:35

HALF MARATHON MEN

1. Luca Cantoni 1:09:03
2. Pau Mas 1:10:14
3. James McKenzie 1:13:29

WOMEN

1. Jemima Cooper 1:23:50
2. Karin Spjuth 1:24:12
3. Linda Krantz 1:24:19

9k MEN

1. René Menzel 28:38
2. Conrad Franks 29:02
3. José Lluís Lobay 29:57

WOMEN

1. Liv Westphal 32:37
2. Stine Gjelstrup Hansen 34:26
3. Marion Hegge Langli 36:03



ENTER NEXT YEAR

Date:

19th October, 2025

Location:

Parc de la Mar, Palma, Mallorca

Distances:

Marathon, Half-marathon, 10km

Website:

palmamaronmallorca.com

Facebook:

palmademallorcamarathon

Instagram:

@palmamaron

X: @PalmaMarathon

2025 RACE CALENDAR

PICK YOUR RACES AND PLAN YOUR
SEASON WITH THE 220 EVENT GUIDE



OULTON PARK DUATHLON

30 MARCH 2025

Put a spring in your step with a choice of
draft-legal racing, a rowathon, 10k
running and non-draft racing.

OP EVENTS

DECEMBER

**1 BLACK COUNTRY
SPLASH
& DASH AQUATHLON**
(400m S/5km R)
Ounsdale Leisure
Centre,
Wolverhampton,
West Midlands.

entrycentral.com

15 DORNEY DUATHLON
DECEMBER

(various dists)
Dorney Lake,
Windsor,
Buckinghamshire.
atwevents.co.uk

HALESOWEN AQUATHLON
(400m S/5km R)
Halesowen, West
Midlands. britishtriathlon.org

**WOODFORD COMMUNITY
DUATHLON**
(various distances)
Woodford Community
Centre, Stockport,
Greater Manchester.
mcafitness.co.uk

MARCH 2025

2 FROSTY AQUATHLON
(various dists)
Littlehampton,
West Sussex.
tuff-fitty.co.uk

**16 THE DRAFT-LEGAL
'CHILLY' DUATHLON**
(● SPRINT)

(5km R/20.5km B/
3km R)
Castle Combe Circuit,
Chippenham, Wiltshire.
dbmax.co.uk

**23 ELY 115
SQUADRON
DUATHLON**

(various dists)
Ely, Cambridgeshire.
elytriclub.co.uk

LINGWOOD DUATHLON
(various distances
and events)
Lingwood Village Hall,
Norwich. tri-anglia.club

**TRIWORKS EAST
FORTUNE DUATHLON**
(● SPRINT)

(various distances
and events)
East Fortune race
track, Edinburgh,
Scotland.
tri-works.co.uk

**30 OULTON PARK
DUATHLON**
(● STANDARD)

(various dists)
Oulton Park Race
Track, Little Budworth,
Tarporey, Cheshire.
opevents.co.uk

APRIL

**6 NORTHUMBERLAND
DUATHLON**
(● STANDARD)
(various dists)
Druridge,
Northumberland.
vo2maxracingevents.co.uk

**13 DYFI DASH
TRIATHLON**
(400m S/20km B/
5km R) Bro Dyfi Leisure
Centre, Machynlleth.
ceristtriathlon.org.uk
**WEST LANCASHIRE SPRING
TRIATHLON & DUATHLON**
(various distances)

● EUROPEAN CHAMPS QUALIFIER ● WORLD CHAMPS QUALIFIER

and events)
Edge Hill University,
Ormskirk.
epicevents.co.uk

19 ACTIVE TRAINING WORLD MALLORY PARK DUATHLON

(● SPRINT)
(various dists)
Mallory Park Circuit,
Kirkby Mallory,
Leicestershire.
atwevents.co.uk

26 CLUMBER PARK DUATHLON

(● STANDARD) (various
dists) Clumber Park,
East Midlands.
trisociety.co.uk

27 HARROGATE SPRINT TRI & AQUATHLON

(various dists & events)

Harrogate, North Yorks.
harrogatetriathlonclub.co.uk

MAY

4 HORWICH TRIATHLON & DUATHLON

(various distances and
events) Horwich Leisure
Centre, Bolton.
epicevents.co.uk

5 TADCASTER TRI

(various dists)
Tadcaster, North Yorks.
evensplits.events/tadtri

THAMES TURBO SPRINT TRIATHLON

(426m S/21.5km B/
5km R) Hampton Open
Air Pool, London.
thamesturbo.co.uk

11 EARLY BRIGG SPRINT TRIATHLON

(400m S/20km B/
5km R)
Ancholme Leisure
Centre, Brigg, Lincs.
fastfwdsports.co.uk

EAST GRINSTEAD TRIATHLON

(various distances
and events)
The Kings Centre,
East Grinstead, West
Sussex.

egtriclub.com/triathlon

ROYAL WOOTTON BASSETT SPRINT TRIATHLON

(400m S/20km B/
5km R)
Lime Kiln Leisure
Centre, Swindon,
Wiltshire.

royalwoottonbassetthounds.co.uk

TELFORD TRIATHLON AND AQUATHLON

(various distances
and events)

Much Wenlock Leisure
Centre, Shropshire.
telfordtri.co.uk

17-18 OUTLAW HALF NOTTINGHAM WEEKEND

(● SPRINT) (various
distances and events)
National Water Sports
Centre, Nottingham.
Nottinghamshire.
outlawtriathlon.com

18 SOUTHPORT TRIATHLON AND DUATHLON

(● STANDARD TRIATHLON)
(various distances and
events)
Waterside Lodge,
Southport.
epicevents.co.uk

25 DORNEY LAKE TRIATHLON

(● SPRINT)
(various distances)
Dorney Lake,
Windsor, Berkshire.
dorneylakeevents.com

DARLEY MOOR MAY SPRINT DUATHLON

(● SPRINT)
(4.8km R/18.3km
B/2.4km R)
Darley Moor Race Track,
Ashbourne, Derbyshire.
crazylegsevents.co.uk

JUNE

1 COVENTRY SPRINT TRIATHLON

(400m swim/20km
B/5km R)
Xcel Leisure Centre,
Coventry, West
Midlands.

epicevents.co.uk



BLenheim PALACE TRIATHLON

7-8 JUNE 2025

One of the nation's oldest and most popular
multisporting weekends, set in the grounds of
the magnificent UNESCO World Heritage Site.

IRONMAN 70.3 BOLTON

8 JUNE 2025

Experience a warm northern welcome at this middle-distance humdinger.

DEVA TRIATHLON

(●AQUABIKE) (various distances and events) Grosvenor Park, Chester, Cheshire. chestertri.org.uk

7-8

NORTHUMBERLAND FESTIVAL OF SPORT

(various distances and events) Druridge Bay Country Park, Morpeth, Northumberland. vo2maxracingevents.co.uk

BLenheim PALACE TRIATHLON (●SPRINT)

(various distances and events) Blenheim Palace, Woodstock, Oxfordshire. blenheimtriathlon.com

8 EASTBOURNE TRIATHLON

(●STANDARD) (various distances) Eastbourne, East Sussex. eastbourmetriathlon.co.uk
IRONMAN 70.3 BOLTON (1.9km S/90km B/21.1km R) Bolton, Greater Manchester. ironman.com

THE SLATEMAN TRIATHLON AND DUATHLON (●STANDARD DUATHLON)

(various distance and events) Llanberis, Wales. alwaysaimhigh.events.com

22 CARDIFF TRIATHLON

(●STANDARD) (various distances and events) Cardiff Bay, Wales. alwaysaimhigh.events.com

JULY

5-6 OUTLAW HALF

HOLKHAM WEEKEND (various distances and events) Holkham Hall, Wells-next-the-sea, Norfolk. outlawtriathlon.com
WOODHORN MUSEUM TRIATHLON (●SPRINT) (various distances and events) Woodhorn Museum, Ashington, Northumberland vo2maxracingevents.co.uk

12 ARTIC ONE TRI AND PARA-TRI FESTIVAL (●AQUABIKE)

(various distances and events) Dorney Lake, Windsor, Berkshire. arctic1.co.uk
UPTON TRIATHLON AND DUATHLON (●SPRINT DUATHLON) (various distances) Fish Meadow, Upton-upon-Severn, Worcs. uptontriathlon.com

13 IRONMAN 70.3 SWANSEA

(1.9km S/90km

B/21.1km R) Swansea, Wales. ironman.com

19-20

BELVOIR CASTLE MULTISPORT FESTIVAL (●STANDARD DUATHLON) (various distances and events) Belvoir Castle, Leicestershire. castleraceseries.com

26-27

OUTLAW TRIATHLON WEEKEND (various distances and events) National Water Sports Centre, Nottingham. Nottinghamshire. outlawtriathlon.com

27 IRONMAN LEEDS (3.8km S/180km b/42.2km R)

Leeds, Yorkshire.

ironman.com

ETON DORNEY SPRINT TRIATHLON (●SPRINT) (750m S/20km B/5km R) Dorney Lake, Windsor, Berkshire. dbmax.co.uk

AUGUST

17 BLITHFIELD TRIATHLON (●AQUABIKE) (various distances and events) Blithfield Reservoir Staffordshire. pma-racing.co.uk

SEPTEMBER

7 SWYD SPRINT TRIATHLON (●SPRINT)

(750m S/20km B/5km R) Barry Island, Wales. allornothingevents.com

FLEET FEET TRIATHLETES (●STANDARD) (1.5km S/42km B/10km R) Knockburn Loch, Aberdeen, Scotland. fleet-feet.com

NEWBURY TRIATHLON (300m S (pool)/22km B/5km R) Newbury. triathlon@newburyvelo.co

14 IRONMAN 70.3 WEYMOUTH (1900m S/90km

b/21.1km R) Weymouth, Dorset. ironman.com

CHELTENHAM TRIATHLON (various distances) Sandford Parks Lido, Cheltenham, Glos. sandfordparksido.org

21 IRONMAN WALES (3.8km S/180km b/42.2km R) Tenby, Wales. ironman.com

28 HEVER CASTLE TRIATHLON AND MULTISPORT FESTIVAL (●STANDARD TRI)

(various dists and events) Hever Castle, Kent. castleraceseries.com
SALCOMBE GIN SPRINT TRIATHLON (700m S/19km B/

3km R) Salcombe, Devon. letsgovelo.co.uk

OCTOBER

5 THRUXTON MASS ATTACK DUATHLON (●SPRINT) (various distances) Thruxton Motor Circuit, Hants. challenging.events

NOVEMBER

2 DEVON DUATHLON (●STANDARD) (various distances) Roadford Lake, Broadwoodwiger, Devon. sportivaevents.co.uk



HEVER CASTLE TRIATHLON

28 SEPTEMBER 2025

A great weekend for all the family, with activities for all ages and fantastic crowd support.

CASTLE TRIATHLON SERIES

WANT TO LIST YOUR 2025 RACE(S) IN THE NEXT ISSUE?

Simply email events@220triathlon.com with the event name, date, distance on offer (write 'various dists' and/or 'and events' if multiple), location (venue, nearest town and county) and the website.

HOW CAN I WINTERPROOF MY BIKE?

FAQ

Winter can be a worrying time for your bike. Spray from wet roads can be particularly corrosive, especially if salt has been spread to prevent ice. Punctures are a big problem, too – replacing an inner tube on the roadside is much less fun in the cold. But, if you follow our plan to protect you and your bike, you'll storm through autumn/winter with plenty of miles in your legs ready for a summer of racing.



Fit Mudguards

Mudguards cut down the amount of spray that hits you and your bike when riding on wet roads. There are several types that can be fitted quickly and easily to a race bike, but always follow the manufacturer's instructions to assemble the mudguards.

Best for a road bike are mudguards that attach to the brake area and onto the seatstays and forks. The set pictured above attaches to the brake pivots with zip ties. Thread each mudguard under the brakes and secure tightly. Rotate the wheels to check that the tyres don't rub on the mudguards.

Line up the mudguard stays and frame attachments so that the wheels rotate without catching on the mudguards, then secure them in place.

Fit wider tyres

Step one If possible, buy a set of wheels for winter riding, especially if your bike has expensive race wheels. Look for ones with standard spoking and wide rims so you can fit wider tyres, which give good grip. Ceramic-coated rims are most durable and withstand salt water but require dedicated brake blocks and are



quite expensive.

Step two Fit wider and heavier tyres. Soft compounds grip better but wear quicker. Use tyres with some kind of puncture-prevention strip in them, like Kevlar. Also use standard, not lightweight, inner tubes. Worn tyres puncture more easily so check regularly and replace them.

Step three Inflate the tyres after fitting, but not to as high a pressure as you would use in summer. Lower tyre pressures give extra grip and improve traction – 80psi is a good winter pressure for a 70kg rider. Fit valve caps in winter to prevent salt water getting in, oxidising the metal and causing them to stick shut.

Protect your drivetrain

Step one Not only are the exposed parts of your drivetrain (chain, chainset and sprockets) attacked by water (and ultimately corroded), dirt can also stick



to the lubricant and form a grinding paste that wears out these components. Degrease the whole drivetrain by spraying it with de-greaser and leaving it to soak in.

Next, wash off with hot, soapy water. Use a sponge on the chain, and brushes to clean the sprockets and chainset. Work the brushes hard between the sprockets. You can buy bike-specific brushes but clean paintbrushes will do.

Apply heavier lubricant than you would use in summer so it doesn't wash off quickly in wet weather. But remember that heavy lubricant isn't an all-winter fix. It still collects dirt, so this process – all three steps – must be repeated often.

TRI SPEAK

Wondering what the 'washing machine' is, or where to find your M-dot?! Make things easy with our guide to common tri terms...

'A'-Race The most important race of your season

Age-grouper Non-pro triathlete

Aerobic Aerobic exercise involves oxygen consumption by the body

Anaerobic How much energy your body can produce without using oxygen

Aquabike Race with just swim and bike elements, no run

Bilateral breathing Breathing every three strokes when swimming

Biomechanics The forces applied to your body during exercise

Bonking Running out of energy mid-race or training session

Brick session When you 'brick' two disciplines together, e.g. bike and run

Cadence Pedal rate on bike, in revolutions per minute (rpm)

Carb-loading Eating a carb-heavy meal prior to a race to boost energy

Catch The part of the swim stroke where you pull on the water

Core strength Development of the stomach and lower back area in support of strength

DNS/DNF Did not start, did not finish – abbreviations found in race results

DOMS Delayed onset muscle soreness (after racing or training)

DQ Disqualified, abbreviation in race results

Drafting Hitching a ride on someone else's slipstream in the bike or swim

Drag The amount of turbulent displaced air that an object creates, resulting in a slowing effect

Duathlon Usually a run/bike/run

Electrolyte drink Contains sodium and potassium to help your body hydrate

Elite Another word for a professional athlete

Glycemic index A ranking system for carbohydrates based on their effect on blood glucose levels

HIT High-intensity training

HRmax Your maximum heart rate. Occurs when digging deep!

Hyponatremia A deficiency of sodium found in the blood

Intervals Intensive training using repeated on/off efforts

Kona Place in Hawaii where Ironman World championships are held every October

Lactic acid Produced in high-intensity workouts, it can inhibit oxygen movement around the body and slow you down

Low glycogen training Training without taking on carbohydrates to increase the body's ability to burn fat

Main set A block lasting 40-50% of a session where the heart rate is elevated

M-dot Abbreviation for the Ironman logo

Midfoot strike When running, your front foot strikes the ground flat – as opposed to toe or heel first

Muscular endurance Your muscles' ability to produce a given level of force for an extended duration

Negative split Completing the second part, e.g. a run lap, faster than the first

Overpronation Foot rolls inwards on impact rather than outwards

Overtraining Common symptoms of training too much with inefficient recovery include insomnia, headaches, moodiness, loss of enthusiasm, and increased illness due to a suppressed immune system

PB Personal best

Pronation The natural 'turning in' of the foot

Power output Measured in watts on your bike

Pull The mid part of the swim stroke where the hands and arms accelerate using the purchase from the catch

Reps Pre-fixed distances covered and pre-fixed recoveries maintained

Rest interval (RI) Period of rest between reps

Sculling Swim drills that use your hands alone to propel you forward through the water

Sighting Looking ahead/at an object while swimming to keep on course

Swimrun Partner race where you do multiple swims and runs

T1/T2 Abbreviation for 'Transition 1' (swim to bike) and 'Transition 2' (bike to run)

Taper Reducing your training in the days just before your race

Tempo effort Challenging, sustainable effort

Threshold run A run at about 80% of your max heart rate for no more than 20mins

Time trials A set-distance session, where the aim is to swim, bike or run as fast as you can over the distance

Transition area The place where you rack your bike and swap kit between disciplines

Tri-bars Also known as aerobars, they help you race aerodynamically

Tumble turn Fast way of turning at the pool wall by performing a forward roll, push off and a twist to return to the initial stroke position

Turbo trainer A frame that attaches to your bike, turning it into a static trainer

Underpronation When your foot rolls outwards on impact

VO2 max A measure of the body's maximal ability to use oxygen to produce energy

Washing machine Way to refer to a chaotic swim start!

Watt (w) The unit of measure in which power is expressed

Waves The groups which triathletes are put in to start a race



DANIEL JAMES MEDIA



GETTY IMAGES



MARTYN BRUNT

Martyn is tri's foremost average athlete and is living proof that hours of training and endless new kit are no substitute for ability.

TRIATHLON TERRORS

Not impressed by zombies or vampires or other standard horrors, our man Brunt argues that some elements of triathlon are much more unsettling...

Thanks to the time delay between writing and the mag going on sale this might be the issue on sale during the festive period, but as I write this month's offering, I am looking out of my front window watching hordes of zombies wearing blood-soaked bandages stagger past my house, demanding money with menaces from terrified passers-by.

I know this probably sounds like a normal night out in Coventry, but on this occasion, it is because it is Hallowe'en.

Not that I find zombies, witches and vampires very scary. After more than 20 years doing triathlons I'm well used to the sight of people lurching around with sheet-white faces and bits falling off their bodies.

Triathlon, for all it's wondrousness, can be scary sometimes, something I had cause to reflect on recently when I decided

what the most frightening aspect of being a triathlete is. In fact the more you think about it, the more you realise how nerve-jangling our sport can be, so here are my top ten tri terrors (with my personal hell at number one). Read on if you dare...

10. Swimming face first into an Elastoplast floating in a pool.

9. When someone at a club AGM says to the room "I think (insert your name) would be a good at (insert committee role which promises to rob all your free time and good mood until you can shake it off)".

8. When you're flying downhill on your bike and you foolishly glance at your speedo, leading you to immediately ponder how much protection against high speed gravel-rash Lycra provides.

7. When a stranger at bike racking says "can I borrow your track pump?" and you know you'll probably never see it again.

6. When you're stalking a cyclist and have just entered the dreaded drafting zone when the hairs on the back of your neck stand up at the sound of the Race Marshal of the Apocalypse draws near.

5. When you see the next yellow mile marker in the distance which never seems to get any nearer until you can eventually just make out it reads "Caution Runners".

4. When your bike box disappears through the rubber curtain on the airport baggage check in, and you wonder whether it will turn up in the same continent as you.

3. When you go wide to try to avoid the piranha pack at the start of the swim and end up ploughing into the thickest blanket of weeds ever, which clutch at you ever more tightly no matter how much you thrash, and drag you down to your salty doom.

2. That moment when you are completely pain free until someone points at your nipple and says "oooh that looks sore", whereupon it immediately starts stinging like you've just been shot.

1. There is nothing – NOTHING – scarier than.... The night before a race. Ah, the number of times I have vainly set my alarm for 4am only to wake up at midnight, 1am, 1.30am, 2am, 2.15am, 2.45am before eventually getting up at 3.30am rather than just lie there imagining all the disasters and humiliations that will inevitably befall me that day. In my waking nightmares I have had to swim without my forgotten goggles, swum off in completely the wrong direction, freestyled head first into a riverbank, done three laps of transition looking for my bike, had more punctures than I carry spanner inner tubes, got into a tangle mounting and dismounting my bike and fallen flat on my face in front of laughing crowds, run the wrong way out of T2, been overtaken on the run by someone walking, and been struck by deadly cramp while sitting naked on the portable loo-of-horrors with my skinsuit around my ankles.

The fact that none of these has actually happened just goes to show that what's in your mind is much scarier than real life. I'm sure you all have your own triathlon dreads to keep you awake at night and if I made them worse, then all I can say is: woooah-ha-ha-ha-haaaaa. **END**

WEEKEND
WARRIOR

Your bike box disappears through the curtain... Will you ever see it again?

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